

## Palestinian prisoners want negotiators to remember them

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held a one-day hunger strike Wednesday to try to force Palestinian and Israeli negotiators to pay attention to their plight. In Jerusalem, Palestinian shopkeepers closed for the day in a show of solidarity with the prisoners. About 3,000 Palestinians, most arrested on charges of anti-Israel violence, remain in Israeli prisons, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said their release is high on his agenda, but Israel-Palestinian talks have been on hold since March. "We will continue the struggle until all prisoners are freed," said Mr. Arafat's negotiator on prisoner affairs, Hisham Abdul Razeq, as he led a 100-person march Wednesday in Gaza City.

# Jordan Times

An independent political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة منشورة من قبل مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Volume 22 Number 6591

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JULY 24-25, 1997, RABI I 19-20, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

## Jordan receives invitation to Tehran conference

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received an invitation from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani to attend the coming Islamic Summit to be held in Tehran. The message, which was delivered by Iranian Minister of Industry Mohammad Ridah Zadeh, also dealt with bilateral relations and means of developing them. Attending the meeting were Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki.

## King receives General Peay

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Royal Court head of the American Central Command, General Binford Peay. The two sides discussed defence issues. Attending the audience was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh and the American Ambassador to Jordan, Wesley Egan.

## Another bomb blast at Turkish Islamist party office

ISTANBUL (R) — A small bomb exploded at an office of Turkey's Islamist Welfare Party Wednesday, the second such attack against the party in three days. Anatolian news agency said. It said there were no casualties in the blast in Istanbul's Fath district, an Islamist neighbourhood. A bomb broke the windows of a Welfare office in another part of the city Monday.

## Bahrain aims to boost links with U.S.

MANAMA (AFP) — Bahrain's crown prince and armed forces chief has called for closer links with the United States in talks with the outgoing commander of U.S. forces in the Gulf, newspapers said Wednesday. General James Binford Peay, on a farewell tour of the region, met Sheikh Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa here Tuesday. The crown prince said Manama wants "to strengthen the solid ties of friendship and cooperation" with Washington and paid tribute "to the U.S. role of maintaining security and stability" in the Gulf.

## Drivers could go to hell, warns Saudi mufti

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's top religious authority warned the young on Wednesday that they could go to hell if they die in a road accident because of reckless driving. "He who dies after being careless at the wheel of his car is considered to have committed an act of suicide," said the mufti, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, in a fatwa, or Muslim religious edict. He noted that Islam, like Christianity, condemns suicide and Muslims who take their own lives are liable to go to hell. The fatwa, published in newspapers, is part of a campaign to curb accidents in Saudi Arabia, where one person is killed every three hours on the roads, according to a recent study. Many youths drive at break-neck speeds on Saudi highways as a hobby, in an ultra-conservative country where entertainment is limited and women are not allowed behind the wheel.

# King issues Royal Decree declaring elections on time

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At the request of His Majesty King Hussein, a meeting was held yesterday between chief of the Royal Court, Awn Khasawneh, and the Muslim Brotherhood's overall leader Abdul Majeed Thneibat to discuss the Islamists' announcement to boycott the upcoming parliamentary elections, which, according to a Royal Decree issued yesterday, will be held this year.

Though the Royal Decree stipulated that "parliamentary elections shall be held in accordance with the provisions of the law" without setting a date for elections, the polls are expected to be held before Nov. 8, the day on which the current parliament's mandate will end.

According to the Constitution, the elections should be held within the last four months of the parliamentary mandate.

The Royal Decree adds a sense of urgency to prospective talks between the government and the Islamists, who have announced their intention to boycott the elections two weeks ago.

Yesterday's meeting represented a clear signal by the King to the Muslim Brotherhood that time was running out on their decision to boycott, since some Islamists at least had hoped that the King would announce a postponement of the elections as a way to ensure their participation. Some observers thought the Royal Decree was also intended to put pressure on the government to reach a

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## Government will hold fair polls — Rashid

By Tareq Mumani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid on Wednesday said that His Majesty King Hussein ordered the government to hold free and fair general elections.

Mr. Rashid said that King Hussein called for taking all necessary measures to ensure the success of the coming elections.

"The government is fully committed to holding free and fair elections," said Mr. Rashid.

The minister said that holding elections in time will strengthen democracy, urging the citizens to exercise their right to cast their

votes and to elect those whom they believe represent them.

Mr. Rashid added that the ministry took all suitable measures to guarantee the success of the elections, voicing hope that the whole political spectrum will participate in elections.

As regards to the Brotherhood's boycott of the coming elections, he said: "The door of dialogue is wide open and we are contacting them and hope they will withdraw their decision."

The Constitution gives the King the power to call for the parliamentary elections and the Cabinet to set the date.

## Israeli Arab attacker of British teens in hospital

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli Arab who rammed his car into a group of teenage British holiday-makers and then went on a stabbing rampage with a Japanese sword has been admitted to hospital, a police spokeswoman said Wednesday.

"He told police he didn't feel well," spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said. Israel Radio said the man had a ruptured spleen.

A British woman and a youth were taken to hospital Tuesday night with stab

wounds and later discharged. Eight other people were slightly hurt in the attack near Jaffa's Old City, close to Tel Aviv.

Israel Radio said the 31-year-old man, whom police have not named, slammed his car into a group of about 40 15-year-old British Jews visiting Israel on a summer tour and rushed toward sidewalk cafes with a sword and a knife.

An off-duty policeman, Danny Consul, arrested the

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## Palestine Airlines land first flight in Amman

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The first Palestinian commercial flight landed Wednesday in Queen Alia Airport coming from the Egyptian airport of Al Arish in Sinai in accordance with an aviation agreement the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) signed with Jordan earlier this year.

"We are happy that the first regular Palestine Airlines (PA) flight has landed in Queen Alia Airport," Brigadier Fayiz Zaidan, head of the Palestinian Aviation Authority said following the Fokker-50 plane's arrival with 35 passengers on board.

"We hope this flight will be the starting point of launching PA flights from the Gaza Strip, which we hope, will take place by the end of this summer," Brig. Zaidan added.

The departure of the PA 152 flight was delayed for three hours in Sinai "due to complications caused by the Israeli security checks at Rafah border," Brig.

Zaidan said.

Talks between Israel and the PNA on the operation of Gaza airport was deadlocked because Israel's condition to keep full control on airport security.

Commenting on his talks with Shaol Mofaz, head of the planning section in the Israeli army, Brig. Zaidan confirmed that there are several problems that have not been solved during their meeting.

"We resumed our talks with the Israelis to discuss and sign later the protocol regarding the operation of the Gaza International Airport. We have already started talks and have merged the two sides into one document versions," he said.

"The Israeli side insists on signing a protocol that would cover all security, civilian and aviation issues. So far, we have reached a document where all differences and agreements are included," he explained.

"We will continue our discussions and very soon

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# Israel, PNA tone down peacemaking optimism

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Wednesday toned down optimistic notes sounded a day earlier at a meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

"Nothing was achieved yesterday," Mr. Arafat told a Brussels news conference and reiterated his frequently voiced call for Israel to implement full interim peace deals signed since 1993.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeated a demand that the PNA first take "real action" against "terrorist organisations outside the authority of the PNA and inside it."

There had been few hopes before the Arafat-Levy

talks, arranged in Brussels by the European Union, of any breakthrough in a peacemaking crisis touched off by the start of construction in March of a Jewish Settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

But in the media glare of the meeting, sponsored by the PNA's highest financial backer, Mr. Arafat at first spoke of having achieved "significant and positive steps."

Mr. Levy, who had been largely sidelined by Mr. Netanyahu from U.S. mediation efforts, said in Brussels he was "highly satisfied" with his discussions with Mr. Arafat and sure they would be able to establish "the confidence necessary to proceed."

Less than 24 hours later, the gloss faded.

"I am looking to achieve

something concrete. We are not asking for the moon," Mr. Arafat said after meeting Belgian Foreign Minister Eric Derycke.

It was back to basics for Israel, too — a focus on security as the impetus for an agenda of unimplemented aspects of the interim peace deals: opening air and sea ports in Gaza and a corridor for Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Israel also stood firm on the occupied Golan Heights. In the 120-seat parliament Wednesday, legislators voted 43-40 to approve a preliminary reading of a proposed law to make the return to Syria of any part of the plateau conditional on the support of at least 80 lawmakers.

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# Israel votes for bill against withdrawing from Golan

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's parliament Wednesday voted in favour of a bill aimed at blocking a pull-out from the Golan Heights which the Jewish state captured from Syria 30 years ago.

The proposal, which sparked an opposition walk-out, stipulates that any move to withdraw from the strategic plateau must be approved by a two-thirds majority, or 80 MPs out of the 120-member parliament.

The bill, voted by 43 MPs to 40, must go through three readings in the Knesset.

set, the Israeli parliament, before it becomes law.

Israel seized the Golan during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and annexed the area in 1981.

The plateau, which overlooks northern Israel, is a key stumbling block preventing reconciliation between Syria and Israel, whose peace talks have been on ice since February last year.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and most of his ministers voted in favour of the bill, although earlier Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi had declared him-

self against the move in the name of the government.

The about-face enraged the opposition, which called for a new vote and announced a boycott of parliament, accusing the government of deceiving members about its intentions.

"In the name of the entire opposition, we will boycott parliament until next Monday to protest against the manner in which this proposal was adopted," said the leader of the Labour parliamentary group Raanan Cohen, as

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# Jordan beats Kuwait, qualifies to Pan-Arab Games soccer final

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN SCORED an impressive 3-2 win over Kuwait Wednesday to qualify for the final of the soccer event at the 8th Pan-Arab Games which conclude in Beirut July 27.

The win qualified Jordan to meet the winner of Thursday's other second round match between Syria and Lebanon.

His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday sent the team a cable of congratulations on their landmark achievement and urged them to continue their efforts in the upcoming match.

Jordanians took to the streets following the match honking horns and waving the Jordanian flag in celebration.

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Jordanian soccer team members celebrate after winning their match against Kuwait 3-2 and qualifying for the final of the soccer event in the Pan Arab Games Wednesday. Jordanians took to the streets all over the Kingdom in celebration (Reuters photo)

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## Princess Sarvath celebrates birthday today

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan today celebrates her 50th birthday.

Born in Calcutta on the eve of the partition of the Indian sub-continent, the Princess is the daughter of two prominent individuals in the areas of diplomacy and public service. Her father, the late Mohammad Ikramullah, was Pakistan's first secretary of state for foreign affairs and ambassador to Canada, France and the United Kingdom among other countries.

Her mother, Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, who hails from the Suhrawardy family that originates in Iraq, was Pakistan's first woman member of parliament. She also served as ambassador to Morocco and several times as delegate to the United Nations.

The Princess lived in all the countries in which her parents were posted, but was educated mainly in Britain.

Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath were married in double ceremonies in Pakistan and Jordan in 1968. They have four children: Their Royal Highnesses Princess Rahma, Princess Sumaya, Princess Badiya and Prince Rashid as well as three grandchildren.

Since her marriage, Princess Sarvath has been involved in many aspects of life in Jordan, mainly in the fields of education and



HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan

social welfare.

A member of the Council of the Foundation of the International Baccalaureate Organisation, Princess Sarvath, in 1981, founded the Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS) under the umbrella of the Hashemite Society for Education.

As an independent, non-profit co-educational institution, the school has been a catalyst in contributing to the development of the educational system in the country.

Among Princess Sarvath's other notable achievements are the establishment of the Centre for

Special Education, the Sheltered Workshop and the Princess Sarvath College, under the auspices of the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA) of which the Princess has been president since 1972.

While the Centre for Special Education is regarded as a pioneering project in the care and education of the mentally challenged, the Sheltered Workshop provides graduates of the centre and others with training and job opportunities.

In addition to focusing on early childhood education,

the Princess Sarvath College caters to the needs of women from less fortunate segments of society.

Princess Sarvath's contributions in the field of health services came through her involvement in the work of the Jordan Red Crescent Society (JRCS).

Her Majesty the late Queen Zein El Sharaf honoured the Princess by asking her to take over the ladies branch of the JRCS, which was instrumental in setting up the Al Hilal Hospital in 1952.

The Princess later became the Honorary Vice President of the Society which operates several hospitals and health clinics in different parts of the country. In 1991, she spearheaded an international appeal that raised over \$1 million worth of medicine and medical supplies for Jordan.

Princess Sarvath has recently become the Chairwoman of a committee overseeing the renovation of the Martyr's Memorial.

In recognition of her services to the country, His Majesty King Hussein bestowed upon Princess Sarvath the Grand Cordon of the Jewelled Order of the Renaissance (Al Nahda).

Princess Sarvath is also the recipient of decorations and awards from other countries and international organisations, including the Abu Bakr Medal from the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.



Her Majesty Queen Noor inaugurates the 16th annual Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts

## Queen opens Jerash Festival

AMMAN (J.T.) — Lighting the torch in the Oval Piazza of the ancient Greco-Roman city of Jerash, Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday launched the festivities of the 16th annual Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts.

The ceremony was capped by a performance at the South Theatre, honouring Jordanian singers who have won national and regional Arab competitions, a Royal Court statement said.

The Queen also opened an exhibition of the first Arab Sculptors' Forum, in which artists from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon are participating.

The Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts is one of Jordan's main summer tourist draws, attracting visitors from throughout the world and the region, particularly the Gulf countries.

The festival's promotion of local artisans and artists encourages craftspeople to produce innovative, high-quality products for both local and international visitors, the statement said.

The Jerash Festival supports Jordanian performers and artists by fostering their interaction with international artists.

Jordanian performers have received scholarships from visiting troupes,

while others have been invited to perform abroad.

Jerash's North Theatre, which has undergone extensive restoration, will be used for the first time in the festival's history by hosting a poetry recital evening by the renowned poet Mahmoud Darwish, according to the statement.

The North Theatre will also hold sophisticated music concerts by the Mediterranean, European Union (EU), Canadian, Polish and National Music Orchestras as well as Peter Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty" performed by the Russian Omsk ballet.

The South Theatre will feature the festival's popular shows, that include Iraqi singer Kathem Al Saher, Egypt's Hani Shaker and Lebanon's Nawal Al Zuhbi, Assi Al Halani and Wael Kfoury, according to the statement.

Theatre lovers, frequenting the Artemis Theatre, will get a special treat when the Globe's celebrated Royal Shakespeare Company presents its light-hearted comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream." This will be followed by another Shakespearean play — "Much Ado About Nothing" — performed by BLT, a talented American troupe, the statement said.

The Jordanian Actors Association

will add an interesting sequel to the legend of Robin Hood with their play "Ferdinand, son of Robin Hood."

The festival offers a comprehensive range of children's activities which encompass plays, poetry recitals, book fairs, art exhibitions and musical performances.

Its annual Handicrafts Exhibition, located along the Colonnade Street, includes top quality handicrafts from throughout the Kingdom as well as Lebanon and Bahrain.

Folkloric dances from Germany, South Africa, Japan, Greece, Chile and India will introduce newcomers to the festival and welcome back old favourites such as the Spanish Flamenco and Jordan's Al-Rozana dance troupes, according to the statement.

Irbid's Arab Music Company, currently documenting songs of the Arab World, will present their "Blad Al-Sham" repertoire; while Algeria's operetta, entitled "Heizia," will provide a provocative blend of Western and Arabic music styles.

Members of the Royal Family, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and his wife Jamie, the governor and mayor of Jerash and members of the Festival's Higher National Committee accompanied Queen Noor to the opening.

## Peace Corps graduates volunteers from intensive cultural, language training courses in Kingdom

By Tanya Habbouja  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Peace Corps in Jordan graduated its first group of volunteers from an intensive three-month cultural and Arabic language training course in an inauguration ceremony Wednesday.

The course was preparing these volunteers for two years of community service.

"The relationship and work our volunteers develop over the next two years will remain long after they've returned home," U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley Egan said.

Peace Corps Country Director Larry Bartlett congratulated the 27 volun-

teers, and led them in a pledge of service to their host country and mission.

Mr. Bartlett cited an initial Peace Corps founder, Hubert H. Humphrey, and exhorted the volunteers to follow his basic principles. "Peace is not passive, it is active," Mr. Bartlett quoted. "Peace does not happen, it requires work."

Mr. Manser congratulated the volunteers and thanked the host families who cared for the volunteers during their first 54 days in the Kingdom.

"I hope the volunteers take a clear and true image of Jordan back home to the United States," Mr. Manser stated.

The ceremony marked the beginning of the Peace

Corps mission in Jordan, as the volunteers left their host families to begin working in their respective sites.

When the Jordan Times spoke with host mother Selma from Madaba, she expressed sadness that her "daughter" was leaving her to begin her mission.

"All the volunteers have become like our children," she said. "I hope to host many more volunteers in the future."

The volunteers will be working with the Ministry of Social Development, Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). Mr. Bartlett affirmed.

"While you come as Americans, you will live and work as Jordanians," he concluded.

The 27 volunteers include 20 women and seven men, including four married couples.

Jordan represents the 132nd country where Peace Corps volunteers have served since its establishment in 1961.

The Jordanian government and the Peace Corps signed an agreement in October of last year, stipulating its establishment in the country.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Ministry of Social Development Minister and Ambassador Egan.

## Lawyer urges army chief to free Dakamseh

AMMAN (AP) — A Jordanian soldier, sentenced to life in jail for slaying seven Israeli girls, has petitioned Jordan's Army chief to free him, the soldier's lawyer said Wednesday.

Corporal Ahmad Dakamseh sent the plea to field Marshal Abdul Hafez Marei Kaabneh Tuesday through his lawyer, Hussein Mjeli.

"We appealed to the army chief to cancel the court verdict and free him or reduce the sentence or halt its execution," said Mr. Mjeli, who headed the defence team during Mr. Dakamseh's seven-week trial.

A military tribunal sentenced Mr. Dakamseh Saturday to life with hard

labour. A life sentence is equivalent to 25 years in prison under Jordanian law.

The verdict cannot be appealed. But the army chief and His Majesty King Hussein have the power to reduce the sentence or cancel it. Mr. Kaabneh's decision was expected to be announced soon.

Mr. Dakamseh, 26, was charged with premeditated murder, which carries the death penalty. But the court said the sentence was reduced because he was mentally unstable.

The soldier shot the seven Israeli girls to death while they were on an outing to Naharayim island on the Jordan River, which Israel returned to Jordan under a

1994 peace treaty.

He maintained the girls' slaughter bothered his prayers while he was on duty in the northern outpost, a popular attraction for Israelis.

In a related development, a statement by Dakamseh's relatives claimed that their northern village of Ibdar was placed under curfew one day after police clashed with demonstrators hurling stones during a protest in support of the soldier.

A government official, insisting on anonymity, denied that a curfew was imposed, but said that security was beefed up to prevent violence.

## Premier affirms support for ISESCO, to leave for Malaysia on official visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday reaffirmed Jordan's backing for the Amman-based Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) and suggested that the organisation teach Arabic in non-Arabic speaking Islamic countries.

During a meeting with ISESCO Director General Abdul Aziz Twejri, the premier suggested that the private sector in Muslim countries help finance this project for the benefit of all Muslims.

Mr. Twejri outlined ISESCO's activities and future projects as well as the agenda for the organisation's upcoming meeting. He affirmed the organisation's appreciation for Jordan's continued support.

Mr. Twejri later met with Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri and the two reviewed ISESCO's cooperation with Jordan in cultural, educational and scientific fields.

Paying tribute to Jordan for its backing of ISESCO, he described the Kingdom's role as one of the founders

of the organisation which was founded in 1982.

Also Wednesday, the prime minister received President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)-based Ajman University of Science and Technology Said Salaman.

The two reviewed cooperation between the university and Jordanian institutes of higher education.

The Amman-based Arab Academy for Banking and Financial Studies Wednesday signed an agreement with the Ajman University for Science and Technology stipulating cooperation in training cadres for banks and financial institutions located in the UAE.

Earlier, Dr. Majali called at the Lands and Survey Department and heard a briefing by Director Abdul Mun'em Samara Zoubi on the department's activities and digital maps.

Dr. Majali will pay an official visit to Malaysia beginning Friday for talks with government officials.

He and his accompanying delegation are scheduled to attend an international economic conference there.

Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi affirmed that, during the visit, Jordan and Malaysia will conclude several agreements related to health and medicine.

Jordan will be sending physicians and nurses to Malaysian health centres and hospitals, he added.

The two sides will conclude an agreement regarding Malaysian contributions for the construction of a nursing college at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) as well as a community college to teach rehabilitation of the physically disabled.

The two sides will also discuss prospects for exporting Jordanian drugs to Malaysia.

They are also slated to cover facilities offered in Jordan for Malaysian students to study in the Kingdom's medical and nursing colleges.

The premier will be accompanied on his trip by the Ministers of Finance, Health and Medical Care and Tourism and Antiquities as well as various businesspersons.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

## FILMS

\* "Miro: Theatre of Dreams" (With commentary in Arabic by Adnan Al-Shaer) at Darat Al-Funun, Jabel Weibdeh on Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

\* "Fantasia" at the American Center, Abou on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

## POETRY RECITAL

\* Recital of poems by poet Fadwa Touqan at the Modern Educational School, Khaldi on Thursday (7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.)

## CONCERT

\* Performance by Al-Hamamah Band for Popular Art at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.

## JERASH FESTIVAL

Thursday  
\* Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Artemis Stage at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Concert by Wael Kfoury at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Poetry recital — Recital of poems by Mahmoud Darwish at the North Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Concert by the University of Jordan band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.

and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Display of handicrafts and sculptures at the Columns Street and Zeus Vault.  
\* Performances by local, Arab and foreign bands at the main square at 7:30 p.m.  
\* Children's play "The Young Pedlar" at Gracia Theatre at 8:00 p.m.  
\* Children's plays: "Princess Yagout" and "The Witch's Garden" at Gracia Theatre at 7:00 p.m.

## Friday

\* Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at Artemis Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Concert by Wael Kfoury at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Concert by the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra at the North Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Performance by Mu'ta University band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.  
\* Children's play "The Young Pedlar" at Gracia Theatre at 8:00 p.m.  
\* Display of handicrafts and sculptures at Zeus vault.  
\* Musical performances by Jordanian and Italian bands (7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.) on a circus at 9:00 p.m. at the main square (on Thursday and Friday).  
\* Children's plays "The Prince and the Fish" and "Antar and Nafisah" at Gracia Theatre at 7:00 p.m.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Dead Sea spas discussed

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi Wednesday met with Romanian Ambassador to Jordan Ioan Agaficioiu to discuss Romanian expertise in medical treatment through mineral water and how Jordan might benefit from such. The two discussed the potential creation of therapeutic centres and spas in Jordan, particularly in the Dead Sea area as well as cooperation in other health fields. The ambassador extended an invitation to the minister to visit Romania in order to inspect that country's spas and medical centres.

## Minister inspects summer camps

IRBID (Petra) — Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri inspected the Al Hussein Summer Camps where youth are conducting voluntary work and community service. He supervised the youth from government schools in Jordan conducting maintenance work at schools in the Irbid Governorate.

## RSCN announces camp programme

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature (RSCN) Wednesday announced that it has developed a programme for students participating in summer camps. The programme orients youth on ways to safe-

guard the environment through documentary films, slides and field work. The programme also outlines RSCN activities in Jordan as well as caring for national wildlife reserves.

## RSS-UNEP cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has selected the Environmental Research Centre (ERC) of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) as a regional collaborating centre associated with UNEP in preparing the annual report entitled "Global Environment Outlook" issued this year. ERC has also been selected as a collaborating centre with the UNEP-affiliated International Environmental Technology Centre, located in Japan, for information exchanges on environmentally sound technologies.

## Britain donates to Kufranjah society

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe Wednesday presented the president of the Kufranjah Benevolent Society with a cheque of JD 18,500. The society, established in 1988, will use this donation for the purchase of an agricultural tractor as an income-generating project. The Kufranjah Society focuses on providing medical aid for cerebral palsy patients as well as moral and financial support for Thalassemia patients. This donation comes within the British Partnership Scheme which concentrates on lending assistance through supporting income-generation projects.



## Foreigners leave as anti-Taleban forces close in on Afghan capital

KABUL (AFP) — A group of about 20 expatriate aid workers pulled out of Kabul by road Wednesday in response to an offensive close to the city against the Taliban militia, witnesses said.

"It's only a partial staff reduction, not an evacuation," stressed Ross Everson, Kabul chief of Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR).

ACBAR, an umbrella organisation for 37 foreign-based humanitarian aid organisations working in Kabul, recommended a reduction in staff numbers as opposition forces closed in on the city.

Anti-Taleban forces under commander Ahmad Shah Masood advanced overnight from Qarabagh district centre, 45 kilometres north of Kabul to Kalakan village a little closer to the capital, an opposition spokesman claimed.

Intense fighting was reported on a new frontline in the Tagoh Valley east of Kabul Wednesday. Tagoh controls access to Sarobi district centre and the national highway from Kabul to the Pakistani border.

In a surprise offensive launched last Saturday, Mr. Masood's ex-government forces captured the Parwan

provincial capital Charikar, 64 kilometres north of Kabul and Bagram military air base to the southeast.

Opposition spokesman Abdullah said from the opposition alliance territory in northern Afghanistan that anti-Taleban troops had now entered Hossein Kot, north of Kabul.

"After cutting off Taleban forces to the north we succeeded in advancing into Hossein Kot," he said.

The claim could not be immediately confirmed. Journalists attempting to travel north of the capital have been prevented from leaving the city limits at tense Taleban checkpoints.

"We met little resistance and there is not much defence between our forces and Kabul, but we need to consolidate and assess the situation," said the close aide of ex-government military Mr. Masood.

Mr. Abdullah vowed that Mr. Masood's forces — who together with northern ethnic Uzbek fighters and a Shiite Hezbi-Wahdat faction form an anti-Taleban alliance — would keep mounting pressure on the capital, which has been held by the Islamic militia since last September.

The fighting broke about

six weeks of stalemate on the frontlines north of Kabul, and raised the spectre of factional fighting returning once again to the war-battered Afghan capital.

Apart from sporadic air raids, there has been no conflict in Kabul since September 1996 when the Taleban Islamic militia ousted Mr. Masood and the government of ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The ACBAR pullout from Kabul did not cover foreigners employed by the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who have not yet officially announced any plans to reduce their staff numbers.

Mr. Everson said the foreigners who had left Kabul early Wednesday morning by road for the Pakistani border were all volunteers. Some 100 ACBAR associated expatriates remain in the Afghan capital.

ACBAR has adopted a security level of three in Kabul, which Mr. Everson said meant stockpiling food and preparation for level four, which would be a total evacuation of foreigners.

Mr. Everson said such a move would only take place if there were convincing

signs that the fall of Kabul to Mr. Masood's attacking force was imminent.

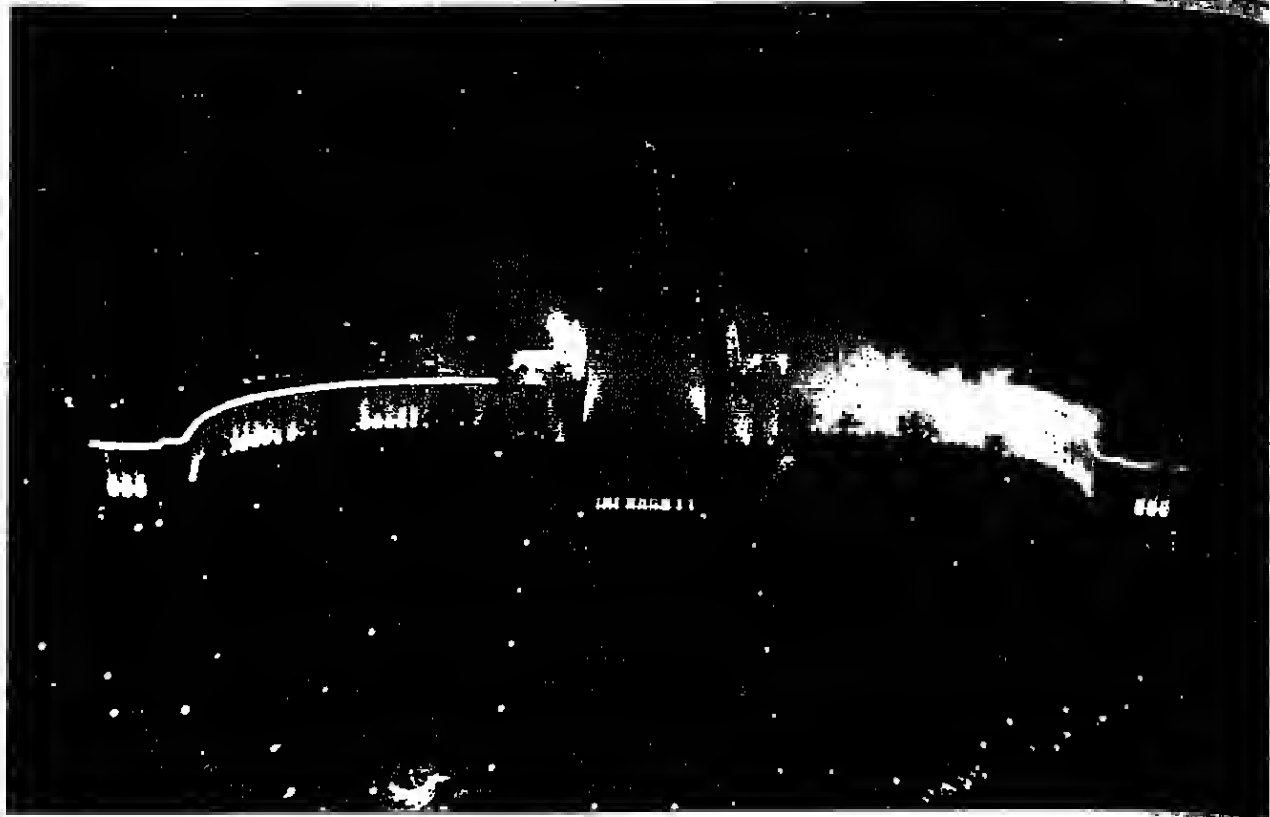
It was not yet clear that Mr. Masood was advancing with the intention to capture Kabul, analysts said. For the meantime, the ex-defence minister appeared to be content to inflict maximum damage on weakened Taleban defence forces, they said.

However, Jeep-loads of Muslim militants were seen driving to Kabul from the eastern Afghan provinces Tuesday as reinforcements for the capital's frontlines.

Taleban prevented Kabul-based journalists from visiting the frontlines Wednesday, making independent confirmation of conflicting battlefield claims impossible.

The current fighting indicated the belligerents have little faith in the current peace talks sponsored by Pakistan and the United Nations, observers said.

The Taleban have called for the release of all prisoners before agreeing to any ceasefire, whereas the opposition has apparently decided the military option is still viable.



Smoke comes out from the roof of the Musee de l'Homme in Paris, Wednesday. Around one-hundred people are battling a blaze at the Paris museum, located near the Eiffel Tower, which holds collections on anthropology, pre-history and ethnology of cultures from all over the world. The museum also houses a library of animal volumes and the Museum of Cinema. The extent of the damage is not yet known (Reuters photo)

## Fire ravages Museum of Mankind in Paris

PARIS (AFP) — French firefighters battled for seven hours to put out a spectacular fire which ravaged the roof of the Palais de Chaillot, a Paris landmark overnight, causing extensive damage.

Although the blaze was confined to the roof, it was feared that exhibits in the east wing of the monument had suffered water damage.

The building had been undergoing restoration work at the time. Police said Wednesday that the fire had probably started accidentally and could be connected to welding work which had been carried out on the roof.

More than 100 firemen took three hours to bring the blaze under control and seven hours to extinguish it.

Two of the fire fighters were slightly hurt.

Thick, acrid smoke billowed out onto the Trocadero Square, overlooking the Eiffel Tower. Firemen struggled to contain the flames as the fire fed off the incendiary material of the roof, made from wood, zinc and glass.

The blaze erupted late Tuesday evening in the wing that houses the Museum of French Monuments and the Museum of Cinema. The collections were not damaged in the fire, but it was feared the water used to put it out might have caused damage.

"It is difficult to tell for the moment," a fire services spokesman said.

Dozens of reels of film

were moved out of the Henri-Langlois Cinema Museum situated in the basement of the building, while firemen moved out anything else they could away from the rising water.

Guy Cogeval, director of the monuments museum, said he was worried about fragile plaster casts being damaged.

"The heart of the museum, the most beautiful part, is affected. The (section) houses the plaster casts which are very fragile," he said.

The museum, which stretches over 16,000 square metres on four levels, opened in 1882.

The building was designed by architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc and housed a collection of

some 6,000 plaster, 70 models of Gothic and Roman churches and monumental sculpture.

Minister of Culture and Communication Catherine Trautmann spent several hours at the scene and said she was very distressed. She entered the museum to inspect the damage once the fire was brought under control.

The blaze started on the roof of the east wing which had just undergone an 18-month restoration. The flames, first spotted by Mr. Cogeval from his flat overlooking the wing, spread rapidly.

Three explosions were heard, the firemen's spokesman said, suggesting they had been caused by gas or acetylene tanks.

## Clinton says U.S. probes records on Vatican holdings

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Tuesday said the Treasury Department was reviewing its documents to determine the extent to which the Vatican may have held money taken from Nazi victims during the World War II.

His comments came after a U.S. cable television network reported the discovery of a 1946 Treasury Department document charging that the Vatican let Croatian Fascists hide gold coins and cash worth about \$130 million that had been taken from Serbs and Jews.

"The Treasury Department has assured me that they have historians combing the records and we will reveal whatever information we have and let the facts take us where they lead us," Mr. Clinton told reporters at the White House.

Chief Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls denied the allegations contained in the document, say-

ing: "These reports have no basis in reality."

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) called on the Vatican to finally open its extensive World War II archives and to set up an independent commission to investigate its role in the war.

WJC Vice-President Kaiman Sultanik said: "The archives have remained sealed by the Vatican despite repeated pleas by scholars that they be opened. We believe this Pope who has recognised Israel and condemned anti-Semitism will rise above petty bureaucrats who seek to obscure the truth."

AE, a cable television network, said it came across the document during research for a two-hour documentary, "Blood Money: Switzerland's Nazi Gold," to be broadcast Saturday.

The first marked the first time in more than a year-long hunt of U.S. national archives by researchers that the Vatican has been men-

tioned in connection with gold looted by the Nazis or their allies.

The previously classified document, dated October 1946, said that pro-Nazi Croatian fascists removed about 350 million Swiss francs from Yugoslavia at the end of the war.

In the document, U.S. Treasury Department official Emerson Bigelow wrote to the department's director of monetary research that the British managed to capture only about 150 million.

He said a reliable source in Italy had told him the Vatican held the rest and rumours were rife that much of that was later taken through a Vatican pipeline to Spain and Argentina.

Meanwhile, other researchers said they had found documents showing that the Vatican City Bank had substantial dealings with Swiss banks blacklisted by the allies for doing business with Germany and its Axis partners.

## Liberia's Taylor waits to be proclaimed president

MONROVIA (R) — Liberia's electoral chiefs make final ballot checks Wednesday before proclaiming former warlord Charles Taylor winner of presidential elections.

Partial results announced Tuesday night gave Mr. Taylor an unassailable lead of more than 75 per cent over 11 rivals, assuring him the top job he failed to win by the gun.

Elections Commission Chairman Henry Andrews told a news conference he hoped formally to announce the winner by Wednesday night — certainly not later than Thursday, by law.

He said Mr. Taylor had not been proclaimed the winner after Tuesday's results as the commission wanted to be sure turnout was as it estimated — 600,000 from 700,000 registered voters.

Mr. Taylor needed 50 per cent plus to win on the first round.

However, Mr. Andrews added: "Once these figures are released they are official and there's nothing to stop you as journalists to draw your own conclusions (as to the winner)."

Mr. Taylor addresses a Wednesday news conference at 1 p.m. (1300 GMT) at his party headquarters.

Liberians looking for strong leadership after an agonising seven-year civil war voted overwhelmingly Saturday for the man who started the fighting.

The conduct of the presidential and general elections, Liberia's first since 1985, received unanimous endorsement from more than 500 foreign monitors and over 1,000 local observers.

But other presidential candidates, defeated even on their home turf, cried foul as Mr. Taylor's margin of victory stretched with each successive result bulletin.

The results gave Mr. Taylor's National Patriotic Party 356,548 votes or 75.4 per cent from 472,863 votes counted.

His nearest rival Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the only woman in the presidential race, polled 45,195 votes or 9.5 per cent.

At a news conference after the results bulletin, Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf expressed her scepticism as to the legality of Mr. Taylor's lead.

## Nine countries urge U.N. membership for Taiwan

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United Nations formally circulated Tuesday a letter from nine countries asking the General Assembly to consider U.N. membership for Taiwan.

This is the fifth successive year such a request has been made in advance of the annual assembly session opening in September.

The effort has been blocked each time in the assembly's steering committee which decided, after hearing supporters and opponents, that there was insufficient backing to inscribe the item on the agenda for the session.

The Nationalist Chinese Republic and its army fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the mainland to the Communists in a civil war. But Taiwan continued to hold China's U.N. seat until it was ousted by the General Assembly in 1971 and replaced by the Beijing government, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province.

This year's letter was signed by representatives of Burkina Faso, Dominica, Gambia, Grenada, Guinea-

Bissau, Nicaragua, Senegal, Solomon Islands and Swaziland.

China, a permanent member of the Security Council, has already reacted angrily to the move. A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing called it a "reckless trampling of the U.N. Charter" and a "crude interference in China's internal affairs."

China's U.N. envoy, Ambassador Qin Huanxin, in a letter Tuesday to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, strongly urged "Nicaragua and a very small number of other countries to redress their erroneous acts immediately."

Referring to Hong Kong's return to Beijing's rule earlier this month and to the 1999 reversion of the Portuguese colony of Macau, he continued: "Facts will prove that the concept of 'one country, two systems' is not only a good way to settle the questions of Hong Kong and Macau, but will also certainly succeed in Taiwan."

Mr. Qin added: "Only

national reunification is the fundamental guarantee of the interests of the Taiwan comparators. Only with the accomplishment of peaceful reunification can the Taiwan comparators truly and fully enjoy, together with other Chinese people of all ethnic groups, the dignity and prestige attained by their great motherland in the world."

An explanatory memorandum attached to the nine-nation letter said: "Two governments have been co-existing within China for nearly half a century, which is unique in the international community."

It also said the 1971 General Assembly resolution "violates the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and that "the Republic of China on Taiwan fully meets the requirements for United Nations membership."

Other arguments made in the letter included: "Parallel participation in the United Nations by the two sides of the Taiwan Straits would be conducive to regional secu-

city and world peace." "Full participation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations is a vital issue affecting the integrity of the United Nations and its viability in the 21st century." "The General Assembly's review of its own resolutions is not without precedent" and "the General Assembly should reexamine the deficiencies of (the 1971 resolution) in order to restore promptly to the 21.5 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan the lawful right to participate in all activities within the United Nations system."

In view of the extreme sensitivity of the issue to Beijing, the U.N. secretariat appended a disclaimer, saying the nine-nation document "has been reproduced as received."

It added: "The designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities."

## S. Korea sees agreement on food aid to North

BEIJING (R) — The South Korean Red Cross said Wednesday an agreement for more food aid for hungry North Korea would likely be signed this week despite a complaint by Pyongyang that Seoul's offer was not enough.

Southern officials had offered the North a food aid package of about 50,000 tonnes of rice and corn, a plan similar to one agreed in May, said Lee Byoung-Woong, secretary general of the South Korean Red Cross Society.

"We suggested the second assistance programme be almost the same as the first assistance programme," Mr. Lee told reporters at a briefing after a first round of talks in Beijing.

In Seoul, a South Korean Red Cross official said the 50,000 tonnes of food would be available for delivery to the disaster-plagued North by the end of October.

"Our South Korean Red Cross also suggested to the North Korean Red Cross that medical items and clothes be exchanged," Mr. Lee said.

Mr. Lee said the talks had gone well, and South Korean embassy spokesman Chang Moon Ik said Red Cross officials hoped

an agreement could be signed after further meetings Thursday.

However, Chue Gyeongrin, head of the North Korean Red Cross delegation, said Seoul's offer was not high enough, especially compared with aid donations from other countries.

"Today's talks were very friendly and I am very optimistic about the prospects of tomorrow's talks," Mr. Chue told reporters after the morning round of talks.

"They want as much as possible," Seoul embassy spokesman Chang said, adding that the Southern Red Cross was unable to pledge more because it had to rely on private donations.

International aid workers say the Communist North is on the brink of famine after floods in 1995 and 1996 devastated much of the country's farmland and industrial bases, exacerbating already severe food shortages in the hermit nation.

Pyeongyang says severe drought is threatening to do even more damage to its crumbling agricultural sector this year.

The negotiations follow meetings in Beijing last May when the South Korean Red Cross pledged 50,000 tonnes of grain aid

for the Stalinist North. That shipment is due to be completed later this month.

In Wednesday's talks, the South voiced concern that previous food shipments may not have reached intended beneficiaries and proposed that future aid be sent via Panmunjom, the only border crossing between the two Koreas since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in an uneasy armistice.

"The North doesn't want to open Panmunjom for political reasons," Mr. Chang said. "They don't want to show the aid came from South Korea."

In previous talks, Seoul demanded the aid be clearly labelled as coming from South Korea and tried to win guarantees the humanitarian aid would not fall into the hands of Pyongyang's military.

The aid agreed to last May came on top of \$16 million worth of donations made by Seoul in response to an appeal by the United Nations World Food Programme.

Washington also this month nearly doubled its total food aid to North Korea to \$52 million, intended to combat widespread malnutrition, particularly among children.

## Blocks of ice crash down from sky in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Two large blocks of ice which crashed in Brazil's Sao Paulo state from clear skies are most likely part of a meteorite, a Brazilian researcher said Tuesday.

"It's very strange. In principle they look like normal ice, have no smell. But we are analysing the two blocks and we should have something at the end of this week," said Jurandir Zullo, researcher at Campinas State University.

"I think the most likely answer is that they are part

of a meteorite," he added. The first block of ice slammed through the tiled roof of a bus factory on July 11 in Campinas, 100 kilometres north of the state capital of Sao Paulo.

"People who saw it just after it landed said that it was around eight inches by 31 inches," Mr. Zullo said.

"They then put it in the freezer but it still melted a little. When we got there, it weighed about 50 kilograms," he added.

The second block plummeted down on July 15,

causing a small crater in a rural area some 60 kilometres north of Campinas.

Officials at the local airport at Campinas have ruled out the possibility the ice may have fallen off a passing aircraft.

"The tower at the airport has said there were no airplanes passing when the ice blocks fell," Mr. Zullo said.

A meteorologist at the National Institute for Space Studies said there was no climatic feature on both days which could have accounted for the two ice

blocks.

"I am also very curious," he said.

Mr. Zullo said he had only heard of one other previous incident in Brazil when a crater was found in the Amazon and scientists suspected a block of ice which had subsequently melted.

In April 1995, Chinese experts, saying it could be a scientific first, recovered what they believed to be chunks of meteoric ice that plummeted to Earth in Zhejiang province.

## Pacific leaks flood out from Canberra

CANBERRA (R) — Australia, already embarrassed by the loss of a top secret paper slating its Pacific neighbours, faced further discomfort Wednesday with more leaks, including an angry diplomatic e-mail.

As international criticism continued over the first gaffe, the leaked Foreign Affairs Department memo criticised "securitisation" in Prime Minister John Howard's intelligence office for believing in "a darker

reality."

The government Wednesday widened an inquiry into Reuters' publication last week of a 93-page Austeo — Australian Eyes Only — paper which contained a scathing assessment of South Pacific economies and leaders.

The inquiry will now include a second Austeo paper published Wednesday. A third document has also leaked out, a diplomatic memo criticising Mr. Howard's Office of National Assess-

ments' scathing rundown on the Pacific. It was stapled to notes given to journalists at a briefing on another issue.

"The fundamental problem seems to be that assessment agencies are disdainful of reality as presented by those of us out in the field and convinced that there is some darker reality which only they, from their 'securitisation' ivory tower, can detect and on which, as they jump at shadows, they insist on having the last word,"

said the memo from Ian Lincoln, dated Wednesday.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade lists Mr. Ian Lincoln as Australia's deputy high commissioner to New Zealand. A department spokeswoman told Reuters she could not comment on what appeared to be private correspondence between two people.

The second Austeo document said neighbouring New Zealand's defence spending was "inadequate."



Border guards the Chong Jom border, Wednesday. Thai authorities inside Cambodia which forces

## Pakistani police

KARACHI (R) — Pakistani police are probing a Wednesday shooting in a crowded market in the city, which killed 150 people and wounded more than 150 others. A Shiite Muslim cleric, who was shot dead, was identified as a leader of a group that has been active in the city since the end of the war in Afghanistan. The group, which is active in the city, has been accused of carrying out several attacks in the past. The police are currently investigating the shooting and have arrested several suspects. The group, which is active in the city, has been accused of carrying out several attacks in the past. The police are currently investigating the shooting and have arrested several suspects.

## Pakistan tells

KARACHI (R) — Pakistan's foreign ministry has told the United Nations that the country is not a party to the 1971 resolution that ended the war in Bangladesh. The ministry said that the resolution was not binding on Pakistan and that the country was not a party to it. The ministry also said that Pakistan was not a party to the 1971 resolution and that the country was not a party to it. The ministry also said that Pakistan was not a party to the 1971 resolution and that the country was not a party to it.

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A Thai ranger guards the Chong Jom checkpoint in Thailand's northeastern province of Surin, at the border with Cambodia, Wednesday. Thai authorities have ordered a temporary shut down of the checkpoint following heavy fighting inside Cambodia which forced thousands of Cambodians to flee towards the Thai border (Reuters photo)

## Cambodia royalists reportedly consolidate hold on Samrong

PHNOM PENH (R) — Troops loyal to Cambodia's ousted first prime minister Wednesday consolidated their hold on the key north-western town of Samrong, a Thai army officer said.

The Thai officer, based in northeast Thailand on the border with Cambodia, said there was no heavy fighting Wednesday.

"It seems the situation is calmer today," the officer told Reuters in Thailand. "They are consolidating their hold on Samrong."

Royalist forces took Samrong, some 330 kilometres northwest of Phnom Penh and 30 kilometres from the Thai border, earlier this week.

A Cambodian army officer under Second Prime Minister Hun Sen Tuesday confirmed that government forces were being pushed back from Samrong. He said royalist forces were being helped by Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

"There are more troops there than we expected," said the officer who declined to be identified. Royalist leaders have denied any military link-up with the Khmer Rouge.

Thousands of civilians have fled the area of fighting, many heading for Thailand.

Thai authorities estimated about 20,000 Cambodians were waiting at the border and said they would be allowed to cross to Thai soil if the fighting worsened.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Tuesday it was concerned that Thailand was not allowing civilians to cross into Thailand and that the UNHCR was not being allowed into the area.

"We are increasingly concerned about reports that thousands of people may be massing at Cambodia's border with Thailand and are not being allowed to cross," UNHCR spokeswoman Pam O'Loole told a news briefing.

The UNHCR was appealing to the Thai authorities to open the borders, she said.

Mr. Hun Sen ousted Prince Ranariddh in a bloody coup on July 6 after driving the prince's forces from Phnom Penh.

Sporadic fighting between the two sides has continued in the northwest and intensified at the weekend as Mr. Hun Sen rejected a regional effort to get peace talks going.

Meanwhile, Thai Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchai-

yudh Wednesday warned ousted Cambodian Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh not to use the country as a venue for political manoeuvring.

Mr. Chavalit also reiterated that Thailand would not play a leading role in trying to end the conflict between Prince Ranariddh and strongman Hun Sen.

"It is not appropriate for him (Prince Ranariddh) to use Thailand as the base for political manoeuvres or to use it as the point to meet with his supporters here because it would lead to the misunderstanding," Mr. Chavalit told reporters.

Prince Ranariddh, who fled Cambodia on the eve of a bloody coup staged by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen in Phnom Penh earlier this month, has been seeking support from the world community after Mr. Hun Sen announced the prince was no longer first prime minister.

Prince Ranariddh met several ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) foreign ministers in Bangkok last week as part of the group's effort to solve the political turmoil in Cambodia.

But the three foreign ministers failed after Mr. Hun

Sen shunned their mediation attempts.

Prince Ranariddh then held an emotional news conference in Bangkok before going to Singapore, where he met Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. He was due to return to the Thai capital to meet U.S. special envoy Stephen Solarz Thursday.

Several Cambodian members of parliament loyal to Prince Ranariddh who have also fled Phnom Penh have based themselves in Bangkok temporarily, and have sent out news releases and held meetings to drum up support for their movement.

Mr. Chavalit said Thailand would not play a leading role in resolving its neighbour's problems.

"Thailand will only help resolve the problem within the framework of ASEAN," he said.

In the 1980s, Thailand played a leading role in supporting the resistance forces in Cambodia, which were comprised of Prince Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party, the Khmer Rouge and other small armed guerrilla factions. They were fighting against the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh.

## Pakistani police step up drive against militants

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistani police Wednesday

were questioning scores of suspected Shiite militants arrested in a raid on a religious school in Punjab province which has been plagued by sectarian violence, officials said.

Tuesday's raid marked a tougher approach in the government crack down on religiously-motivated attacks in Punjab where more than 100 people from the majority Sunni and the minority Shiite communities have been killed this year.

Around 175 people were rounded up when some 300 police backed by armoured personnel carriers stormed a large Shiite school, Jamiatul Muntazir, in Punjab's provincial capital Lahore.

Lahore police chief Zulfikar Ahmed Cheema said the operation was launched after "concrete" information the school was

sheltering people involved in sectarian killings.

Police said 25 people were freed after questioning but 150 were still under interrogation Wednesday.

A Shiite scholar, Ghulam Hasan Najafi, accused of "provocative" religious writings, was among those held, police said.

The months of bloodshed have been blamed on rivalries between a Sunni militant group Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and its Shiite counterpart Sipah-i-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP), both based in Punjab.

The Punjab police have detained hundreds of suspects in the past few weeks and stepped up security around places of worship in sensitive areas.

The government has also taken steps to curb provocative literature and writings and threatened action against anyone publishing

such material.

Police said similar operations could be conducted in other madrassas (seminaries) suspected of either fuelling hatred or training and harbouring religious militants. But they did not identify the institutions.

"It is a sensitive issue" and the authorities would first carefully "scrutinise" the working of the madrassas through their own agencies before any raids, a police officer in Lahore said.

Thousands of religious schools across the country are managed by Sunni and Shiite groups which give board and lodging to students enrolled in classes for Koranic teaching.

President Farooq Ahmed Leghari and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have frequently expressed grave concerns over sectarian tension and appealed to religious scholars to help curb

the "menace."

Pakistan has a population of 130 million people dominated by Sunni Muslims. The Shiite Muslims only form around 20 per cent.

The SSP set up in early 1980s, blames Shiite clergy for showing disrespect in writing and speeches towards the Companions of the Prophet Mohammad and demands the Shiite sect be excommunicated from Islam.

The Punjab police recently arrested nine people described as key members of underground terrorist gang which they said included some SSP members whose leader Azam Tariq has been under detention since May.

Mr. Tariq was taken into custody after the high-profile murder of a senior police official who was also a relative of Interior Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

## Pakistan tells Japan of fears from India

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani leaders told Japan's

foreign minister Tuesday they felt threatened by archival India, and urged the two sides to settle disputes through talks.

Pakistani President Farooq Leghari told visiting Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda that Islamabad felt threatened by the development and alleged deployment of missiles by New Delhi.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also spoke of security concerns, according to Pakistan government statements on the talks.

However, a Japanese spokesman said Mr. Ikeda advised Pakistani authorities to sign the nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) even before India did so.

Spokesman Nobuaki Tanaka told reporters Japan

also wanted India and Pakistan to exercise self-restraint and resolve their dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir through talks.

Mr. Ikeda had urged Mr. Sharif and Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan that Pakistan should sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the CTBT, Mr. Tanaka said.

"We further asked Pakistan to take even the voluntary step forward, even perhaps before India, to join in this (CTBT) treaty because, after all, this treaty would not come into effect without India. So why not Pakistan take the lead?"

However, a Pakistani statement quoted Mr. Leghari as telling Mr. Ikeda that it was "not possible for Pakistan to make unilateral

commitments without simultaneous pledges by India to respect regional and international obligations."

Mr. Leghari also expressed concern at what he called the threat posed by the alleged deployment of medium-range Prithvi missiles near the Pakistani border and development of long-range missiles by India, the statement said.

Mr. Sharif briefed Mr. Ikeda on recent developments in Indo-Pakistan ties and drew his attention to "security concerns of Pakistan in the present scenario," another Pakistani statement said.

Pakistan says it will not sign the NPT or CTBT unless India does so. Pakistan has fought three wars with India since they gained independence from Britain in 1947.

Pakistani officials told the Japanese minister that Islamabad was "not really

negative about CTBT or negative about disarmament," Mr. Tanaka said.

Both countries are regarded as potential nuclear powers, with India having exploded a nuclear device in 1974 and Pakistan saying it had acquired the know-how to make nuclear arms, but had decided not to do so.

Mr. Ikeda ruled out the possibility of Japan mediating between India and Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir, the cause of two wars between the two countries.

Mr. Ikeda arrived in Islamabad Monday for a two-day visit to Pakistan at the start of a three-nation Asian trip that will also take him to India and Malaysia.

## Chechens threaten to rescue N. Ossetia hostages by force

MOSCOW (AFP) — The

breakaway region of Chechnya warned Wednesday it will use force to free Chechens being held hostage in the southern Russian republic of North Ossetia if the authorities there do not take action.

"If the North Ossetian authorities do not go half way with us on this legitimate demand, we will be obliged to use our force," First Deputy Prime Minister Movladi Udogov told ITAR-TASS news agency.

Mr. Udogov said it was the "legitimate duty of any state to protect its innocent citizens anywhere on the planet."

In addition to freeing the two hostages seized by gunmen on a bus in North Ossetia on July 8, Mr. Udogov said the Chechen government wanted the culprits to be handed over.

He said a special unit had been formed for such a mission.

Reports at the time said the gunmen were taking the captives to hold against the return of a relative held hostage in the Russian republic of Ingushetia, which borders Chechnya.

Five Chechens were initially seized and three then freed.

Mr. Udogov's threat came amid growing tension in the troubled region.

In the past weeks there have been violent attacks by Ossetians against Ingush, a firefight between Chechens and Ingush on their poorly defined border, and a bomb attack against Russian soldiers in another nearby republic, Dagestan.

Overnight three Chechen policemen died during an attempt to arrest an unidentified criminal, who was also killed in the firefight. Interfax reported from the capital Grozny.

Meanwhile, a Russian prisoner of war was released Wednesday, ITAR-TASS said without giving details.

Hundreds of soldiers remain missing in Chechnya, where fighting ended in August 1996.

Most are believed to have been buried in unmarked graves, but some are still held prisoner, often by families hoping to barter the return of their own sons who were captured or arrested by the Russians.

## First Oder dyke gives way but Brandenburgers brave evacuation

POTSDAM (AFP) — A

first dyke gave way to high floods in Germany's Oder Valley Wednesday but most home owners braved calls by authorities to get themselves out of harm's way, officials said.

Brandenburg state's Interior Minister Alwin Ziel said residents of the area had been asked to leave their homes immediately after a dyke broke near Brieskow-Finkenheerd

south of Frankfurt-An-Der-Oder.

About 10 villages were affected by the floods in the area, the minister said in a radio interview.

"When dykes give way, floods will rise by meters," warned Mr. Ziel.

Before the latest development, only 200 people had been evacuated near the junction of the Oder and Neisse rivers. Evacuees were mostly women, while

men remained in their homes for fear of looters.

Farmers in the Oder marshes Wednesday also began evacuating 40,000 head of cattle.

Water levels on the Oder were stable overnight around record marks after torrential rains in the Czech Republic and Poland earlier this month.

The floods have killed 50 people in the Czech Republic and 60 others in Poland.

## Mowlam plays down IRA arms surrender plan's likely defeat

BELFAST (R) — Britain's

Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam played down the likely defeat of crucial arms surrender plans at Belfast peace talks later Wednesday.

"It's not a disaster, it is clearly a setback but no one ever said this would be easy," Mrs. Mowlam told the BBC a few hours before a vote on Anglo-Irish "parallel decommitment" plans.

The plans, which would allow pro-British and pro-Irish guerrilla groups to hand over their weapons during peace talks, rather than before or after, are the centrepiece of efforts to kickstart the year-old negotiations.

Mrs. Mowlam said that despite huge controversy, which has led to two Unionist parties walking out of the negotiations, the key Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) would stay at the talks.

"The plus point is that although the Ulster Unionist Party has not been able to agree, they are not walking away."

Despite expectation of a rebuff Wednesday, the government remained committed to a Sept. 15 target for the start of substantive peace talks, Mrs. Mowlam said.

The talks are supposed to frame a lasting settlement between pro-British Protestants and the Catholic Irish Nationalist minority to end three decades of conflict which have killed 3,200 people.

Unionist leaders are angry that a new ceasefire by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) will allow the guerrillas' Sinn Fein political spokesmen a seat at substantive peace talks in September without an IRA commitment to give up its arms.

The same rules will also apply to "loyalist" extremists, pro-British guerrilla groups whose political spokesmen are already taking part in the negotiations.

The UUP, the biggest voice of the British Protestant majority, said after talks with Prime Minister Tony Blair that it would oppose government arms decommitment plans Wednesday but would not walk out of the talks.

Ken Maginnis, the UUP's security affairs spokesman, said: "My understanding is that there has been no immediate breakthrough and on that basis it is certain that we will be voting down the government's paper."

The second largest Protestant party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), said

it would walk out after voting against the arms proposal.

Its leader Ian Paisley, one of the Unionist cause's most forceful spokesmen, said after talks with the prime minister that the Northern Ireland peace talks were "dead in the water."

Mr. Paisley denounced Mr. Blair's government for its readiness to negotiate with "IRA/Sinn Fein terrorists" and said admitting Sinn Fein to the talks was an "act of betrayal."

The smaller U.K. Unionist Party said Monday it was quitting the talks.

Peace talks participants will vote on an Anglo-Irish proposal that decommitment of guerrilla arms be tackled by a subcommittee in parallel with political negotiations.

Political sources said that if the government loses the vote, talks could continue either on a bilateral basis between factions, or as "proximity" talks in separate rooms.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams urged the Unionists to stay at the conference table and join his party in trying to bridge the deep gap between them.

Sinn Fein says the handing over of weapons should be part of a final settlement, not negotiations.

## Scientists: Mars would be great playground

PASADENA (R) — Mars

would make a great playground for children, a place where they could romp in the fine Martian sand and jump over one metre rocks with ease, scientists said Tuesday.

Basking in the "spectacular success" of the Mars Pathfinder mission, with the little Sojourner rover trekking across the red planet, scientists on the project allowed themselves a little whimsy at

their weekly news briefing as they made Mars sound like the next Disneyland.

But they also turned serious, saying that two communications blackouts over the last two weekends had not hampered the historic mission, which put the first wheeled vehicle on another planet. They added that the problem had been fixed.

"We have received all of the data in 2-1/2 weeks that

we expected to receive in the first month. We have completely fulfilled our primary objectives," said an obviously delighted Matthew Golombek, the project scientist.

Asked what children could expect to do if they were lucky enough to land on Mars, the man in charge of the photographic part of the mission, Pete Smith, said, "Kids would have a great time on Mars."



## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1974

الصحف اليومية المستقلة العربية المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

### Peace isn't playing games

NETANYAHU & COMPANY never cease to amaze the Arab World with their ability to twist facts and their ever-strong drive to turn political tables against the Palestinians and their other "peace partners."

Foreign Minister David Levy, who was invited by the Europeans to meet with PNA President Arafat in order to break the ice, took the meeting for another opportunity. To reiterate that Arafat was not doing enough to secure Israel's security, and unless the Palestinian leader does, there cannot be a resumption of peace talks.

Unless we are all somehow made to believe that Arafat has more responsibility towards Israel's security than Netanyahu's war cabinet, the world is kindly asked to ignore Israel's assumption that the rest of us are no more than a naive group of politicians hoisting a very short memory and very little conscience.

The fact ought to be very clear to all. The right-wing Israeli cabinet has managed to freeze the peace process with little effort and is doing its best to renege on all agreements signed by the previous government. Netanyahu's hopes that all signed agreements would be ignored, and final status negotiations would be launched early, is in harmony with his dream that he would be the chosen Zionist leader who manages to ensure that no such thing as a Palestinian state is established, and that he would not lose an inch of "Eretz Israel." Zionism even calls for more than that. It seems, it also calls for expansion. The chosen Zionist leader is thus not very worried about peace.

The Palestinians, on their part, have the right to lose their patience. They are the ones under occupation and who are continuously made to lose as time slips by. They are the ones who were shocked after they saw the light at the end of the tunnel, to find that it was an incoming train that would crush them unless their voice is heard loud, and someone manages to pull the brakes of the heavy speeding iron machine.

An Arab saying goes: He heat me then cried, when I went to tell on him, he was already there telling on me! How amazing it is for Netanyahu & Company to be able to apply our own sayings to their advantage!

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Rai' criticised the government for seeking to borrow funds to finance what it calls social security packages, to alleviate the sufferings of the poor people of Jordan. This plan, for which the government has been despatching delegations to the World Bank and the Gulf countries to borrow money to finance, is nothing but an attempt to settle the Palestine refugees in the Kingdom, charged Fahed Faneh. He said that by settling the Palestinians here, the government will be contributing to depriving the refugees of their right to return and, at the same time, burden the country with more debts which will be hard for the coming generations to settle. The loans which the government is now seeking to finance the JD 440-million-plan will carry high interest that will burden the Jordanians for many years to come, with no hope that the Kingdom will be able to pay back except through hard and long years of difficult life ahead, according to the writer. He said this government bears full responsibility for increasing Jordan's debts and it must be clear that it will by no means escape from the responsibility for the consequences. He said the previous governments of Jordan, which are to be blamed for the heavy debts the country has been facing over the past years, have all escaped from bearing the responsibility of their actions, leaving the Kingdom deep in debt and at the mercy of the International Monetary Fund.

A WRITER for Al Dustour said that Israel is known to be behind the obstacles obstructing trade between Palestine and Jordan, and only an end to occupation can remove these hurdles that are causing so many difficulties to the Palestinians and Jordanians. No matter how hard the Jordanians and Palestinians try to find a way out of the this situation, they cannot reach a solution as long as Israel is in the way, said Orelb Rintawi. What is needed by the two sides is joint and concerted diplomatic offensive abroad so that pressure can be exerted on Israel to remove the barriers on trade and to stop imposing its hegemony on the Palestinian economy and Palestinian markets, said the writer. Noting that the Palestinian market is valued at \$3 billion, the writer said that if Jordan acquires only 10 per cent of this market, its exports will double at once. The writer said that Jordan should make it a condition on Israel to remove the trade barriers for agreeing to attend the Doha economic summit. It is true that the Jordanians and the Palestinians yearn to do business together, he said, but wishes can never come true without concerted and determined action on the part of the two sides.

### View from Academia

## Where do we stand in relation to change?

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

THE OTHER day I was browsing through Philip B. Crosby's entertaining and instructive (though not particularly scholarly or profound) book "Let's Talk Quality" (1989). One of the questions he addresses is how institutions and individuals change. His answer is that change happens in phases, namely three.

The first phase is that of developing a "conviction." "That is when a person or organisation's leadership decides that the problem is real and that it is time to do something about it." After briefly describing the reasons that compel individuals and institutions to develop a conviction, he emphasises that this "first phase is characterised by a determination to do something."

The second phase is that of "commitment." Once one develops the conviction, it is important to persevere in the endeavour to bring change about. Commitment is seen here as the insistence to follow things through.

The third phase is of no concern to us here, for it will take us a long time to reach (if we ever reach it, that is), and my comments will be confined here to the more pertinent first and second phases.

Where do we stand in relation to these phases of change? Let's take the first phase, first (i.e. conviction). Well, if we speak at an individual level, we can in all honesty and fairness say that some individuals (and I would insist on "some" here, as opposed to "many" or "most") have developed convictions, strong convictions. These individuals (though a minority) are to be found at the various levels of the social ladder: janitors, messengers, drivers, mechanics, civil servants, teachers, engineers, doctors, administrators, intellectuals, party leaders, politicians, etc. We have first-rate, outstanding, excellent, super individuals.

If we speak in general terms (i.e. about the majority in society), the overall picture is clearly disappointing. If we take our society as a whole, that is, we, in all frankness and fairness say that we have not yet reached this stage. In

other words, we still live in the zero (embryo?) phase, the phase prior to the initial stage of change, according to Crosby's classification.

Whenever we speak in general terms, whenever we look at the overall picture in our society, we are always disappointed. The majority does not take things seriously. It is almost always carefree or careless. The average individual does not hold firm convictions regarding anything. He/she does not know, does not listen, does not read, does not think, does not care. Again, this carefree, careless majority is to be found among the illiterate as much as the literate, the poor as much as the rich, men as much as women, the privileged as much as the less privileged, etc.

Notice here the importance of the word "conviction." "Conviction" is a state or a phase in which individuals are expected to have the two things which we still dream of having in our part of the world, "know" and "care." A conviction is a firm belief, an informed firm belief. The majority of people in our society have impressions about something, inclinations, tendencies, vague ideas, generalisations, words memorised and articulated parrot-like, but never firm opinions or beliefs. As a society, we do not aggressively pursue facts about matters. We bear and swallow things second and third hand from our parents, teachers, politicians, sheikhs (tribal and religious), etc.

What about the second phase (commitment)? Again, we are doing much better at the individual level than the collective. We have committed individuals who do not compromise on their beliefs, do not give up, no matter what, who follow things through, who persevere in the face of all obstacles — even though at the individual level they do better in conviction than in commitment because commitment implies action.

At the general, overall level, again the situation is disappointing. The average person in this part of the world is uncommitted. I almost laugh when Crosby speaks of deter-

mination as a crucial factor. Where is determination in our society? I will tell you where it is: at the level of lip-service, in our rhetoric, our oral and written discourse, our imagination, our poems, our speeches, our sermons, our lectures, our books — but not in our daily life. Of course, people in our society may become enthusiastic and committed, but for how long? Five minutes, five hours, five days and (in the best of circumstances) five months. You can deliver an eloquent, fiery speech to them and fire them up; soon, however, they lose enthusiasm almost as quickly as a punctured tyre loses air on a smooth highway. We do not follow things through, we do not resist enough, we do not fight, we give up or in as soon as we meet the slightest obstacle or inconvenience.

Does this seem that our situation is hopeless, desperate and dismal? Does this mean that we should bury ourselves alive and die? Not exactly. For one thing, there is this small minority among us (the "some" spoken of above) who make life worth living, who win battles for us once in a while, and who bring about some change, development and progress.

For another, the stage prior to Crosby's first stage is important — i.e., the stage of awareness of the need to have a conviction and to be committed. I guess I would arrange the phases of change a little differently from the way Crosby does. I would say that the first stage is that of awareness of the need for change, the stage of disgust at what one sees and experiences, the stage of disappointment with things, the stage of determining what is wrong.

At this level, we are all — individuals and majority alike — doing well. We all know what is wrong, and we all agree that things should become better. Each and every person in the Arab World is an expert on what is wrong and what should be done. The next step is Crosby's first phase. This is where we stand at this point in time in relation to change.

## Peace process cannot progress without 'far more determined U.S. involvement'

By Henry Siegman

NEW YORK — The Middle East is reverting inexorably to the hatreds and violence that characterised the Arab World's relations with Israel for more than four decades. The United States seems to have disengaged from the peace process just as the historic achievements of the Madrid conference of 1991 and the Oslo accords of 1993 are unravelling. State Department officials have sought to justify this disengagement with the misleading slogan that we Americans cannot want peace more than the parties to the conflict do. But, as pointed out in a report issued recently by an independent task force sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, the United States has important interests of its own in the region, all of which would be seriously damaged if the peace process collapsed.

The report urges the United States to become more deeply involved in

Middle East peace making. The United States should seek to convince Israel and the Palestinians to agree to a new declaration of principles that would establish a framework for the difficult final-status negotiations that the parties have yet to engage in.

For a majority of the task force, the most critical features of such a framework are: a) agreement that the goal of the peace process and the final-status negotiations is a viable Palestinian state on contiguous territory to Gaza and most of the West Bank, and b) agreement that the territory on which most Israeli settlers now live will be incorporated into Israel, thus avoiding a traumatic uprooting.

While these principles may seem contradictory, they are not, for 80 per cent of Israel's settlers live on territory that makes up only 10 per cent of the West Bank, mostly along the Green Line that separated Israel and the West Bank before 1967.

Palestinians understand that such a state would have to be demilitarised so as not to pose a security threat to Israel. They must also understand that such a state will not return Israel to its pre-1967 borders. Israel's government must understand that if this peace process is to go forward, it cannot engage in unilateral actions that pre-empt discussion of issues that the parties have agreed are to be part of final-status negotiations.

**"... a peace process that does not lead to Palestinian statehood is a non-starter"**

While continued expropriation of land and settlement activity in the territories may not violate the letter of existing agreements, they certainly contradict their essential spirit and purpose.

The task force report recommends that the question of sovereignty in East Jerusalem be left for last,

and that the status quo in Israel's capital remain unchanged for now. For this "non-solution" solution to work, Israel must refrain from actions that change the demographics of East Jerusalem, such as its plans for the construction of a major Jewish housing project in Har Homa.

Also, the parties should not delay negotiations over the location and boundaries of an area within the current municipal borders of Jerusalem (whose his-

toric boundaries were significantly enlarged in 1967) that would serve as the capital of a Palestinian state. Israeli acceptance of such an arrangement, however symbolic, is a necessary expression of respect for and recognition of Palestinian attachment to Jerusalem. The palpable absence of such respect in

the style and attitude of the current Israeli government has been more damaging to the prospects for peace than differences over substance.

The declaration of principles urged by the task force is not a substitute for the detailed and difficult final-status negotiations. It is not intended to impose solutions to the many complex issues than only the parties themselves can negotiate. Rather, the declaration recognises that a peace process that does not lead to Palestinian statehood is a non-starter.

It asserts what should be obvious: If Palestinians are told that even faithful adherence to the provisions of the Oslo accords will not result in a viable Palestinian state, however demilitarised and however constrained its sovereignty, will still at best yield a series of isolated bantustans that remain effectively under permanent Israeli military control, there is no reason for Palestinians to remain in such a process.

For the United States to be seen as seeking Palestinian acquiescence to such an outcome, or as indifferent to its consequences, is to damage its credibility and the possibility of playing a more constructive role in the future.

It is only when Palestinian statehood is seen as a credible goal of the peace process, and when Palestinian efforts to prevent terrorism and violence in the areas they control are consistent — and in the real world, the latter will not happen without the former — that the confidence necessary for the parties to renege will be restored. Neither of these conditions can be realised without far more determined U.S. involvement.

The writer, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, was coordinator of the independent task force. This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

## The CIA proved no match for Iraq and its Kurdish allies

By Flora Lewis

PARIS — Only dribbles have emerged of the massive fiasco inflicted on the United States by Iraq's Saddam Hussein and his now-and-then Kurdish collaborators last year. It ranks with spectacular CIA failures like the Bay of Pigs and is an example of how far America is from the capacity for domination that friends and enemies alike charge it with exercising.

Thousands of people were involved. The United States did manage to extricate most of them and then sent them as far away as possible — to Guam, presumably because on the isolated, militarised Pacific island their chances of spilling the story would be reduced. Still, a few Iraqis and at least one former CIA official are beginning to talk.

This is certainly a case that needs congressional and more vigorous reporting investigation. It shows that for all the pledges of reform, the CIA still has not learned much and indeed seems incapable of learning much about the Middle East.

From the end of the Gulf war in 1991, Washington has been trying to overthrow or

arrange the assassination of Saddam Hussein by proxy. When Iraqi forces moved north to take advantage of the fighting that had broken out between rival Kurdish factions, it became clear that despite U.S. support for opposition to Baghdad and the "no-fly" zone established from a base in Turkey, Saddam Hussein could still work his will. He withdrew the army under threat of aerial attack but left his shadowy network of agents.

Turkey, which keeps renewing the six-month agreement for use of its Incirlik air base but with increasing reluctance and cost in concessions, undoubtedly knew about what was brewing. But the United States was taken by surprise and lost all it had tried to establish on the ground.

There has been no explanation of why Turkish intelligence did not supply more serious warning and why those who did warn were not heeded. But Turkey has its own complicated web of relations with Iraqi Kurds in its attempt to suppress the insurrection of Kurds in eastern Turkey and destroy their bases in Iraq.

A remarkable new book by the Washington Post correspondent Jonathan

C. Randal illuminates the jungle of conflicting interests and ambitions, repeated betrayals and collusions in Kurdistan that continue to defeat simplistic American attempts to line up friends and overwhelm foes.

Mr. Randal developed an obsession with the hapless Kurds. At great personal risk and even greater discomfort, he managed to keep visiting their beleaguered strongholds over a number of years. He is deeply sympathetic to their cause of community and identity if not to actual statehood, given the fierce resistance of the various countries that hold sovereignty over their tribal lands.

The Kurds are the largest nation in the ethnic sense that have never achieved a state. They were promised one in the post-World War I distribution of the Ottoman empire, but the promise was not kept.

The book is titled "After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?" and subtitled "My Encounters with Kurdistan." It documents the feuds, the treacheries, the atrocities, the ardent patriotism of the Kurds and the endless tragedies they have suffered from almost blind dedication

to the old strategic illusion that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

But it doesn't do much to explain the essential mystery of their survival and their impotence. They are an old tribal mountain people, and while they are Muslim, they always insist that they are not Turkish, nor Arab, nor Persian but distinct from all around them. The culture has vigorous roots and a warrior tradition. Some assimilate in the countries where they live — Turkey, Iraq, Iran primarily — but they do not lose their adamant sense of Kurdishness.

And yet, fairly geographically concentrated unlike the Jews in the millennia of dispersion, they have never managed to form a political union. For all the American airpower protecting them from Saddam Hussein's planes and poison gas, they are no closer to it today.

Massoud Barzani, the Kurdish leader who made the deal with Saddam Hussein, holds control along the Turkish border and therefore monopolises the smuggling trade that became so lucrative with the embargo against Iraq. His one-time ally and rival, Jalal Talabani, wanted a cut of the loot

and a share of power. So they fought and Saddam Hussein tipped the scales. The United States held its nose in frustration and embarrassment.

The United States is still in the neighbourhood, achieving nothing at considerable cost, and the players have lost

none of their appetite for intrigue and brutality. There are things superpowers can't settle in this world, but neither can the clumsy attempts be hidden indefinitely. This chapter of how it's tried is a nasty one.

International Herald Tribune

### LETTERS

#### Time to bury the hatchet

To the Editor:

ARABS ARE well-known for their hospitality and generosity, even to their enemies, which is part of their culture, tradition and religion.

This being the case, I was wondering why Iraq's qualified sports teams were banned from the Pan-Arab Games in Lebanon, despite an official invitation.

I realised later that the Lebanese government, pressured by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (two major sponsors), was forced to act the way it did.

We cannot seem to realise that sports and politics are two separate issues. It is time that the Iraqis were given a chance to join their brethren and prove themselves after all the tragedies they endured as a result of the Gulf war.

Shireen Hamzeh,  
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.



## Society on the Move

## A week of shared joys

For the house of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, it was a particularly joyous week with celebrations of birthdays and a Royal wedding attended by family and friends from near and far and days gone by but not forgotten. The birthdays fete together were those of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath and their son Prince Rashid. Today, as Princess Sarvath celebrates her 50th birthday surrounded by her family, there is a note of further historical significance to July 24, 1947 as it marks the eve of the independence of India and the creation of Pakistan, and those born in those days in the subcontinent are called "Midnight's Children."

Among the many guests who were in Jordan to share in the birthday revelry and the celebration of the marriage of HRH Princess Rahma Al Hassan to Mr. Alaa' Bataineh were Queen Sofia of Spain, her daughter the Infanta Elena, who is the Duchess of Lugo, and her husband the Duke of Lugo; the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg; Crown Prince Henri and Crown Princess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg; King Constantine and Queen Anne Maria of Greece; the Von Hapsburgs; the Agha Khan and Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan; the Markgraf and the Markgräfin von Baden and several von Baden family members; Crown Prince Willem Alexander of the Netherlands; and many friends from the school days and university days of Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath. The Crown Prince and Princess of Japan delegated Mr. Makoto Watanabe, chief chamberlain to the Imperial Court to attend, and the Crown Prince of Bahrain, who was unable to attend, delegated his brother Sheikh Mohammed Bin Issa Al Khalifa. Other old friends from recent diplomatic missions, and thus familiar to many here in Jordan, joined in the festivities as well.

Among them were former Pakistani ambassadors to Jordan Professor Ihsan Rasheed and Tariq Afridi and their wives. Mr. Afridi, who was Pakistan's envoy in Amman until early 1995 and then took up his new assignment in Lisbon, is to be posted next to Libya. Also crossing miles to congratulate the Royal Family were Romualdo and Ampara Bettini. Mr. Bettini, not long ago ambassador in Amman, left to become deputy chief of protocol of the Italian Foreign Ministry. We learned while he was here that he was promoted to chief of protocol.

The weekend celebrations of Princess Sarvath's birthday, while in a more intimate light, are the culmination of joyful events to be followed certainly by the beginning of new ones.

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**BACK TO BUSINESS:** Principals from the Office of the Crown Prince are settling into their new environs with the changes that have been anticipated. Former director of the Crown Prince's Office Michel Hamarneh was officially appointed as a special advisor enjoying the rank of minister. Mr. Hamarneh will take an office at the Royal Court. Succeeding him, as was earlier reported, is former Ambassador to Vienna Husam Abu Ghazaleh who has now assumed his position as the new director of the office.

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**PROPER PORTFOLIOS:** When Minister of Foreign Affairs Fayed Tarawneh paid a visit to Al Ra'i Tuesday evening and met with Al Ra'i and Jordan Times reporters, he revealed that the nine vacant ambassadorial posts will start filling up after mid-August. Those posts are Abu Dhabi, Ankara, Athens, Baghdad, Beirut, Doha, Moscow, Paris, and of course, Vienna. Restructuring of embassies and a review of promotion procedures in the ministry are behind what may appear to be a delay in sealing these appointments, Dr. Tarawneh explained. One of the proposals on the table is to encourage the gleaning of an equal number of diplomats from both Jordan's embassies abroad and from within the ministry itself. That way, as one senior diplomat is promoted to the rank of ambassador, the chain reaction of promotions is witnessed more than 10 rungs down the ladder. The ministry has also retained the expertise of the Institute of Diplomacy in that it now sends junior envoys selected for posts abroad for six months of training about their duties, responsibilities and the workings of their host country. At the end of the course, the foreign service



Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath

hopefuls are given a test; if they fail, they are re-trained. Incidentally, a local newspaper report saying that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Mnjuli plans to scrutinise the files of ambassadors serving more than 25 years with an eye on their approaching retirement, was dismissed by Dr. Tarawneh who said that although the mandatory retirement age is set at 60 (or 30 years of service) by the civil service charter, each case is studied individually. "Sometimes maturity is an asset," he said. And speaking of assets, the foreign minister noted that budgetary constraints make it difficult for most of our ambassadors to play host at social occasions as is par for the course in diplomatic circles. What has helped greatly in many countries is the generosity and hospitality of Jordanians living abroad, who take it upon themselves to invite guests on behalf of the embassy to functions marking Jordanian national celebrations.

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**JORDAN'S TURN:** Such a practice may very well suit Jordan's Ambassador to Tunisia, Haidar Mahmoud Haidar, who has just taken the revered seat of dean of the diplomatic corps in Tunis, replacing Lebanese Ambassador Suleiman Farah. As is the tradition, Mr. Farah hosted a reception at his residence where he handed over the reins of the dealership to Mr. Haidar and bid farewell to his counterparts and friends.

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**ON HIS WAY:** Back in Amman, among other receptions and dinners being held to bid farewell to Jordan's Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Omani Ambassador Mulla Muhammad Bin Sultan BuSa'ed, was the one hosted by Kuwaiti Chorge d'Affaires Faisal Mkhazem. The Sultanate is sending Mr. BuSa'ed to Paris after his more than eight-year stay in Amman. In line to take over as dean would be Iraqi Ambassador Nouri Ismail Al Waiss who will have been Baghdad's top envoy to the Kingdom since August 22, 1989, six months after Mr. BuSa'ed became ambassador to Jordan. It will be recalled that Mr. BuSa'ed was tipped a couple of years ago to be appointed to London, but a request to have him stay on a while longer as relations in the geographic vicinity began to thaw was graciously granted. The thaw gradually warmed and Mr. BuSa'ed is rewarded by the city of light.

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**SITTING PUT:** It has now been confirmed that U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan's tenure in Amman has been extended for another year. The person reported in Washington circles as most likely to succeed Mr. Egan was William Burns, who is now an executive assistant to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. If that talk proves true, Mr. Burns would then be coming to Amman next summer.

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**HISTORY MARKED:** Belgian Ambassador to Jordan Guido Courtois and his wife Rita earlier this week welcomed guests to their reception marking Belgium's national day. The 21st of July is commemorated to mark the for-

mal establishment of the kingdom in 1831 when Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg agreed to support the constitution drawn up by the national congress. In a recent interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Courtois applauded Jordan's own democratic march as a model for the Middle East.

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**SHALOM, SHALOM:** Last week associates and friends turned out in large numbers at the home of Deputy Chief of Mission of the Israeli Embassy Jacob Rosen and his wife Annette's home. The occasion was to give Press Anochi Shalom Tourgeman a friendly send-off.

Mr. Tourgeman, who thought that although the past two years have at times been difficult, said he has made many friends and acquaintances in Jordan and has been very touched by the entire experience of being the first Israeli press officer to serve in the Kingdom. Although his successor has been named, Mr. Tourgeman, this time, preferred to withhold his name until the appointment is made official.

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**ACADEMIC WATERS:** Here for several days last week from Iraq was President of the University of Mosul Qubcis Said Abdul Fatah Al Fahadi. Dr. Fahadi was invited by University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh to review cooperation between the two institutions. As a result of the visit, the two presidents re-activated a previous agreement between both universities which had lapsed somewhat in recent years. Dr. Fahadi, a professor of statistics, also signed an agreement with the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) to exchange faculty and researchers and conduct joint studies. The fruits of this cooperation were the endeavors put forth by Dr. Athel Abdul Jabbar, professor of economics at the University of Mosul, who is currently the head of the Economic Unit at the CSS. Cooperation between the colleges of agriculture and the centres for water resources of both universities was also agreed upon.

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**HE SHALL RETURN:** When word was spreading last week that Khaled Mahadin was going to be the editor of the new National Constitutional Party's newspaper, Al Nahda, nearly everyone who heard it said in rising pitch "Really." Often described as cankerous, in his writing and attitudes, Mr. Mahadin, a former press advisor to His Majesty King Hussein and to two former prime ministers, as well as a former director general of the national news agency, Petra, not long ago was extolling the advantages of leaving journalism. But once a hack, always a hack, say his connections. We can look forward to the party's first edition of Al Nahda towards the end of this month.

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**ON THE MONEY:** Al Bilad newspaper last week reported that it was banking on the investments of "several businessmen and officials" to plump up the weekly's capital enough to satisfy the new requirements of the Press and Publications Law. Not only that, the paper has retained the experience of Bassim Sakjiah, once chief editor of the daily tabloid Akher Kheber, and made him chief editor of the weekly. Mr. Sakjiah's new tenure begins Aug. 1.

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**CHECK IT OUT:** Are you Arab and thinking of emigrating? An advertisement in some local newspapers suggested that Arab citizens will find a large welcome in the "land of old Arabs," the Arab Republic of Libya. The ad, placed by the General Public Committee, invites those interested to avail themselves of the residency rights and job opportunities in the agricultural and industrial sectors of the North African country. Applications are being accepted, the ad said, or the committee's offices around the Arab World.

Jennifer Hamarneh

## Britain's Royal Opera House closes in orgy of culture

By Maggie Fox  
Reuters

LONDON — Britain's Royal Opera House closed for renovations last Monday in a riot of ballet, opera and music.

Royalty, captains of industry and devotees of high culture put on their best clothes for the farewell gala at the beloved Covent Garden site, shutting down for two-and-a-half years of redevelopment.

Its ornate gilt and red vel-

vet tiers were packed to the rafters with an audience for performers like singer Placido Domingo and Ballerina Doreen Bussell.

Prince Charles, patron of the Royal Opera and his aunt Princess Margaret, president of the Royal Ballet, were there, as were former Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major and other top politicians.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has pressed to make the venue into a "people's theatre," was absent. A

Downing Street spokesman said he had had a busy day. National Heritage Minister Chris Smith represented him. Those who were there enjoyed a smorgasbord of ballet and opera, with some of the best-loved scenes from Romeo and Juliet, Così Fao Tutti, Otello and other classics as well as a succession of conductors.

But the point of the gala evening was not forgotten. The £214 million (\$362.8 million) redevelopment will add seats, improve the stage

and give performers a place to rehearse. But it is not yet paid for.

Vivien Duffield, chairman of the Royal Opera House Trust and Development Appeal, told the audience more cash was needed. The National Lottery and government grants had accounted for half, and private donors had pledged £70 million. But £30 million was still needed.

"I have begged, bullied, cajoled, savagely pursued my targets for years," she said. "For those of you who

have not yet given — there's no resting yet."

Lord Peter Chadlington, chairman of the Royal Opera House, said the restoration would mean "a new theatre for the new millennium."

The hope is to make what has been criticised as an elitist venue into something more popular, with cheaper seats and better accessibility. There will also be more performances.

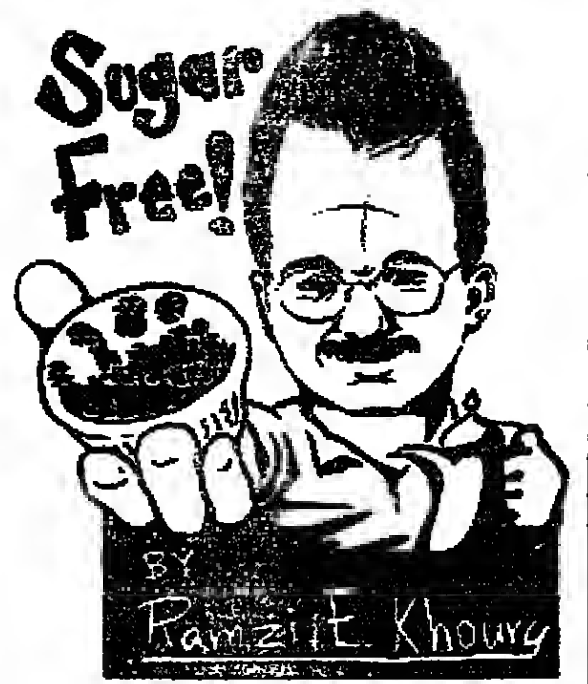
"All this might bring people here who might never have gone into an opera

house before," Lord Peter said.

"I think it's going to be fantastic," said Susan Finch, a ballet patron.

Describing herself as "desperately loyal," Ms. Finch said she would go to performances scattered across London over the next two years.

Many of the opera and ballet fans criticised the former Conservative government of Mr. Major for failing to find a temporary home for the artists while they waited.



## Social practice revisited!

KNOWING THE effect you have on people, I am positive that you must have heard almost every local curse by now. After a while, it gets boring, especially the way members of your direct family or their private parts, get squeezed into every occasion someone curses you.

What may surprise you by now is how some people get hot after their mother or sister is cursed, as if they're not used to it by now! Don't believe it, it's just a superficial social act similar to kissing three times on both cheeks, starting with the left.

How is that? It is all automatic: You see fungus-face approaching, you straighten your back in a last attempt to get brave, wipe your lips dry before to insure that you don't feel as if a part of him is still on your sleeve for the rest of the day, rush to his left side to avoid his front spare tire with a sweat patch in the middle looking at you as if it was Pacman, and then do it! This is where cursing has got to here in Jordan.

What I would like to do is to bring new life into our cursing culture in order to spice things up and make cursing more effective in our society. For one thing, the typical curse, "may God take you" is not effective anymore because it wouldn't be very Godly to take orders from a low-life like you. Why not say instead: May you find yourself on the wrong side of Toujan Faisal? It is much more effective because it is possible. Not only does it imply that the cursed will become politically incorrect, but if your curse was to become a reality, he would wish for God to take him on the spot!

If the situation doesn't warrant harsh measures, you could always put fear into his already insignificant life. You could say: May you become prime minister, yet never be promoted to banker. To attack his self esteem further, you could always crack his bones with: May you experience what Samir Mutawi is going through, and in addition, never become our ambassador in the USA.

Because sexual innuendo seems to be the favourite style of Jordanian traffic cursors, I suggest the following nut-cracker: Next time you make a U-turn like that, may you and all males in your family start period cramps and find all your satellite channels censored!

Cursing with relevance to current affairs keeps our society fresh and dazzling, but beware: the tone of your voice makes a difference. An example of this is the curse: May the government and your wife boycott you! Unless you use the correct tone of voice and in good timing, the inflicted may think that the government and his wife are up to something. Use instead: May your wife turn Islamist and throw your bottles away. If you are no good at controlling your tone of voice but still want to give him the red-eye, just say: May you find yourself communist in this day and age. Equivalently painful: May you try finding a communist, forever.

If the person you are cursing is a woman, then you can sum up all the above by cursing like this: May there never be a separation between religion and state!

### 1st SUGAR FREE CONTEST

Submit up to 5 original  
curses and win!!!

Rules: Your curse has to be relevant to Jordanian culture, not used by any other nation, comprehended within a maximum of 5 minutes after delivery, and should not be longer than 5 sentences or paragraphs.

Grand Prize  
Minister of State seat in next cabinet

First Prize  
Boycotted seat in next parliament

Second Prize  
Your own Soviet Union complete  
with a politburo and a KGB  
(Gorbachev is available at additional cost  
if you want to dismantle your prize)

Third Prize  
A tape of Toujan's 'confidence vote' speeches

Note: If you win any of the above but don't like your prize, you can exchange it with a value meal from the Jordan Times cafeteria. Government officials and their associates are not eligible to enter this contest.







# Kathleen Turner finds sustenance and a revived career on stage

By Matt Wolf  
The Associated Press

CHICHESTER, England — In films, you're hot — and then you're not, says Kathleen Turner, a movie star spending the summer in a town without a proper movie theatre.

In the theatre, you can sustain a career, she says.

"The roles get better and better," says the husky-voiced actress, explaining her return to the theatre, this time in two plays at the Chichester Festival Theatre in Sussex, southwest England.

While American filmmakers can catch Turner in the new comedy *A Simple Wish*, she opened on July 1 in playwright Sandra Ryan Heyward's one-woman show, *Tallulah*. She plays the feisty, outspoken actress Tallulah Bankhead.

Running through July 12, the play is to travel to the West End and Broadway if reviews match Turner's enthusiasm for an expletive-filled script about an irrepressible, ultimately self-destructive actress.

Next month, Turner joins Rula Lenska in a revival of the rarely staged *Our Betters*, a Somerset Maugham play from 1917. A comedy of upper-crust manners, the play casts Turner as Lady Grayston, an American aristocrat paying a price for the moneyed milieu into which she has married. Director Michael Rudman's production runs in repertory through Sept. 27.

And though the Chichester matrons may not know her, the autograph hounds have been out in miniforce.



Kathleen Turner and William Hurt in *The Accidental Tourist*

"I'm a married woman," deadpanned Turner, before gamely posing for a photo with one importuning man. Later, she walked unnoticed through the town's bustling main street, her knapsack giving her the air of an elegant graduate student on the way to class.

To most audiences, the 43-year-old actress is primarily known as one of the sultriest film finds of the 1980s. She came to attention in *Body Heat* and stuck around through movies like *Prizzi's Honour*, *Romancing The Stone*, *Jewel Of The Nile* and *Peggy Sue Got Married*, for which she was nominat-

ed for an Academy Award. In recent years, prize parts have dried up, the demented matriarch in John Waters' *Serial Mom* deliciously excepted, as Hollywood shifted attention to an ever-younger crop of nubile newcomers.

Turner's own struggle with rheumatoid arthritis, a genetic disease, led to several years on steroids and other drugs resulting in a puffy, bloated physique at odds with a contemporary screen siren.

Now slimmed-down and svelte in a pale blue Armani suit, Turner said over lunch that, in Hollywood, "you're

used up by the time you're 40."

"We in America don't know how to accommodate the notion of a sexy-looking woman approaching middle age who is in touch with her sensuality. The industry now is completely run by bankers and money-men. It's really sad," said Turner, running a hand through her honey-coloured hair. "They don't take chances the way they used to."

"I read these scripts and think, 'what about the characters? Has anyone bothered to think of them?' When I was starting, everyone was willing to take

chances. Now, there's less respect for actors. You're not encouraged to develop your individuality."

A lesser actress might settle not so contentedly into a life of character roles, which Turner more or less does in *A Simple Wish*, and two other upcoming films, *Real Blondes* and *Baby Geniuses*. Her saving grace is that she can reinvent herself as a star on stage.

"As a theatre actress, you're either an ingenue, which I never was, or you wait until you come into the great roles. That is, I hope, where I'm headed."

During high school days at the American School in London, Turner often went to the theatre. But her hopes of attending the prestigious Central School of Speech and Drama — alma mater of Laurence Olivier and Vanessa Redgrave — vanished when her father, a career diplomat, suddenly died and she found herself at 17 returning home to Missouri.

Moving to New York after college, Turner worked often in regional theatre: in a Washington, D.C., production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opposite Avery Brooks, and as the young actress Nina alongside Tom Hulce and Linda Thorson in a Canadian revival of *The Seagull*.

"That fourth act is impossible," she said of the Chekhov masterwork.

She made her Broadway debut as a replacement in the long-running *Gemini*, and returned as an above-the-tide star in 1990 to play



Kathleen Turner in the movie *Peggy Sue Got Married*

Tennessee Williams' alluring Maggie in *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*.

The actress' subsequent Broadway stint in 1995 in *Indiscretions* was less fortuitous. Not only did the Jean Cocteau premiere close at a loss, casting a pall over Turner's box-office power, but she was the only member of a five-person cast not to receive a Tony Award nomination. (In 1990, she was a best-actress nominee for Maggie.)

"That hurt. It hurt. It really did," recalled Turner, shifting the conversation outside the restaurant so she could light a Canadian export cigarette. She smiled:

I'm one of the few Americans who smokes.

"I got all these letters of apology from the Tony nominating committee, and there was Eileen — co-star Eileen Atkins — 'storming around backstage, shouting imprecations,' she said.

Worst of all was having to go on television early one morning to announce the nominees only to find herself not among them. "It made me feel ill-used," she said.

For now, Turner sounded pleased to be spending the summer in England's Greenbelt, sharing a beachside rental house with hus-

band Jay Weiss and Nine-year-old daughter Rachel — "I like to be near water." "I don't think my career is over," she said, musing on the ever-competitive movie world that she has for the moment left behind.

In those heady days a decade or more ago, "the greatness was to work with extraordinary actors."

"On the other hand," she said, "I have enough work, enough success that I now have respect without hype, without sensationalism."

"That allows me privacy, for which I am very thankful. I don't want to be flavour of the month forever."



President Bill Clinton is shown on a television screen in a scene from the new movie *Contact*, with actress Jodie Foster (right). Mr. Clinton has protested at the way he is being portrayed in the new film — which is about Earth contact with an extraterrestrial civilisation — Mr. Clinton is pictured talking about the potential significance of the breakthrough. His remarks were actual broadcast quotes made on television news last summer when scientists announced a meteorite from Mars contained a possible sign of life on the red planet (Reuter photo)

## Clinton movie 'debut' worries White House

WASHINGTON, (AFP) — A new blockbuster movie about space aliens may be giving President Bill Clinton his debut on the big screen, but the White House is not too happy about the doctored cameo appearance.

"We've expressed our concern about the use of the president's likeness and taking the president's words out of context," spokesman Joe Lockhart said Monday after the White House sent a letter of protest to the producer.

The film *Contact*, which opened around the country last Friday, features Mr. Clinton seeking to calm the public after an Earth-shaking contact from extraterrestrials.

But getting the big guy for the bit part was more Hollywood hijinks than a casting coup for the movie-maker Warner Brothers.

Contact producer Robert Zemeckis, who so cleverly inserted John F. Kennedy in *Forrest Gump*, adapted footage taken from a 1994 Clinton press conference in which the president urged calm after an incident with Iraq.

In *Gump*, the filmmakers

used Kennedy to set the main character in the past. This time around they wanted a sense of immediacy.

"We wanted to create in the minds of the audience the idea that this truly, truly was happening and it would be very difficult to introduce an actor playing the president because that takes away the sense of reality," said a Warner Brothers spokeswoman.

But appropriating the image of the president has the White House worried about where this might lead.

"There is a difference between legitimate parody ... (and when) the president's image, which is his alone to control, is used in a way that would lead a viewer to imagine that he did not really say," said Mr. Clinton's spokesman Michael McCurry.

The White House found out about the appearance just last week and immediately sent an admonishing letter to Warner Brothers insisting officials should have been notified.

"We want to make the point that we should be consulted but we're not seeking to make a federal case out

of it," Lockhart said, noting that it is too late now to edit out the offending scene. It's not the first time the White House has had to take such steps.

Recently, administration officials warned a fast-food chain about a radio advertisement in which a Clinton impersonator places an order in that unmistakable Arkansas accent.

But Jerry's Subs and Pizza ignored the request to pull the ad and even produced a new spot with the Clinton sound-alike.

"The whole thing is kind of silly and we decided the White House is not going to turn us over to the Justice Department," said Jerry's spokesman Dana Siller. The White House insists that appropriating the president's image for profit is a definite no-no but officials acknowledge squelching things like movies or songs would impinge on the constitutional right to freedom of speech.

For instance, rightwing radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh likes to play a love song sung by a Clinton impersonator to Paula Jones, the woman who has accused the president of

sexual harassment.

"The White House has certain legal rights in terms of commercial enterprise but we don't seek to involve ourselves in people's individual right to use bad taste," Lockhart said when asked about the Jones hal-lad.

Mr. Clinton has not yet seen *Contact*, which stars Jodie Foster, but the White House says he is looking forward to viewing the advance copy Warner Brothers has sent him.

The limelight-loving president may also be hoping it will win him some kudos.

"Maybe now the president can get an Oscar to put next to the first lady's Grammy," said Lockhart, referring to the award Hillary Clinton won for the audio-taped version of her book *It Takes A Village*.

Though *Contact* is Mr. Clinton's first big screen appearance, he did play himself in a television movie about a dying child in January, when he was pitching legislation on family medical leave.

## The 'unfolding,' not aging, of Dyan Cannon

By Douglas J. Rowe  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Dyan Cannon thinks people "unfold" rather than "age."

"I don't like to think of it as aging, because I don't think we do age. I know the world says that, but the world is looking at the outside all the time," the three-time Academy Award nominee says.

As someone whose attempts to look inside herself and others have been well-chronicled, she's circumspect enough to concede her disbelief in aging sounds silly.

Such concessions offer an impression of someone who has a sense of humour and self-awareness, not someone who's a flake — even though she speaks in a hotel suite permeated by the incense she's burning and her soothing new age music still, whether it's a spiritual nostrum or simply denial about aging, one of them, in tandem with a rigorous exercise regimen (her Lorraine trampoline lies nearby), goes a long way toward explaining how Miss Cannon can pull off playing a flim-flam floozy who looks sexy at 60 in a bikini.

She says she took her latest role, in the Jack Lemmon-Walter Matthau film *Out To Sea*, because she wants to perform in things that are "uplifting" — a word she uses more than once during an interview. "I can turn on the TV news all day if I wanted to feel bad," she says, laughing in that trademark cackle often heard on the old Tonight show with Johnny Carson.

"Years ago, I looked up the word 'success' in the dictionary. And one of the definitions of the word is happiness. And I said, 'I'm gonna make a decision to be happy. I'm just gonna make a decision, and that's easy to do when everything's going great, but when it's not, sometimes I feel like an ostrich who sticks my head in the sand.'"

During those down times, though, she feels that certain principles get her by.

"The biggest one is that I put my faith and trust in God," Miss Cannon says. "I've really studied, and searched and thought and read ..." Has she ever. It started with Esalen in the late '60s, continued through primal scream therapy, psycho-cybernetics, rolling "to



Dyan Cannon with Robert Blake in the movie *Coast To Coast*

another, to another, to another, to another."

"I thought wealth and fame and all that stuff was really going to be the pad that I stand on that would make me taller ... and that wasn't it," she says.

"I tried a lot of therapies ... people say 'you had everything, you had this, you had that.' And that's exactly my point: I had the things. Everything. Everything. Thing. Underline the thing" still, she had that feeling in her gut that something was missing.

After all that searching, she says she found the main tenets to which she subscribes in the Bible.

Her grappling with spirituality and religiosity goes back to her childhood. Born in 1937 in Tacoma, Washington, with the name Samille Diane Freisen, she grew with a Baptist father and a Jewish mother.

And while her parents loved each other very much, she recalls them becoming "radical" as their children grew up because they want-

ed the kids to believe as they believed. It was a battle over how to "brand" the kids with religion.

"If it's all one, you can't brand it," she says.

In her late teens, Miss Cannon moved to California to model and to act, and eventually became the child bride of Cary Grant, bearing his only child — Jennifer Grant, now an actress.

After her divorce from Grant, she received best-supporting actress Oscar nominations for 1969's *Bob And Carol And Ted And Alice* and *Heaven Can Wait* in 1978, as well as for writing and directing a short film, *Growing Pains*, Number One, in 1976.

She remarried in 1985, and that ended in divorce, too, after six years. And through it all, she was on that spiritual search.

Finally, she figured out: "Joining a club ain't going to help. I've got to be responsible for me, and my feelings. And that's where it lies. I kept trying to make my happiness dependent on

somebody else. And if he didn't make me happy, he was to blame. Well, that ain't it. I can't blame anybody else anymore."

"That's a big one," she says, breaking into gales of laughter, punctuating what a breakthrough she feels she's made.

And to back up her assertion that she looks to no one else for affirmation and affection anymore, she reveals that she hasn't had a beau in three years. "I always had a boyfriend," she says.

Describing herself as "ultra-sensitive," Miss Cannon says she felt staggered by both divorces.

"I thought I'd always be married to my first husband and, when that one ended, I thought I'd always be married to my second husband. But I always kind of think that everything is going to go on forever," she says.

"Letting go of old concepts for new is always a struggle. But when you're through wrestling, there's victory."



# Nasal spray flu vaccine effective, U.S. study says

By Eddie Evans  
Reuter

WASHINGTON — A nasal spray vaccine proved very effective in preventing influenza among young children in a clinical trial, raising hopes that flu shots may become a thing of the past, the government said.

The vaccine, which was developed by government and university scientists over 30 years, could be in use by fall 1999 under a licensing agreement with biopharmaceutical firm Aviron, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) said.

In the trial, conducted last year, only one per cent of 1,070 children who received the vaccine developed confirmed influenza, against 18 per cent of children who received a placebo, NIH said in a statement.

"The initial results from this trial are very exciting," said Anthony Fauci, director of the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

"An influenza vaccine given in a nasal spray would

be easier to administer and more acceptable than an injection, especially to children. Such a vaccine could have a significant impact on public health," he said.

Aviron will ask the Food and Drug Administration next year to approve use of the vaccine in children and healthy adults and intends to make it available by prescription for the fall 1999 flu season, NIH said.

As with injected flu vaccine, the nasal vaccine would be needed annually, because virus strains change from year to year.

Each year between 35 million and 50 million Americans get flu, and more than 20,000 people die, NIH said. In addition to the cost of lost workdays, an estimated \$4.6 billion is spent annually on direct medical costs.

The trial was conducted by Aviron and NIAID at 10 locations around the country. Two-thirds of the 1,602 children enrolled in the study received the vaccine, while the remaining third received a placebo.

When the children were monitored for flu symptoms, the vaccine was found to protect them from both the A and B strains of influenza virus circulating last year.

"We targeted this trial to healthy young children, because they experience the highest incidence of influenza disease and often spread the virus to others," study leader Robert Belshe of Saint Louis University in Missouri said.

Many elderly people are immunised yearly with an injectable vaccine, because more than 90 per cent of deaths associated with influenza occur in people aged 65 or more. Injectable vaccine is not currently given routinely to children.

Some of the children received two doses of the vaccine, spaced two months apart, and others received a single dose. Both methods were effective, NIH said.

A dose comprised two tiny squirts (0.25 millilitre per nostril) of spray. Overall, the vaccine did not produce side effects.

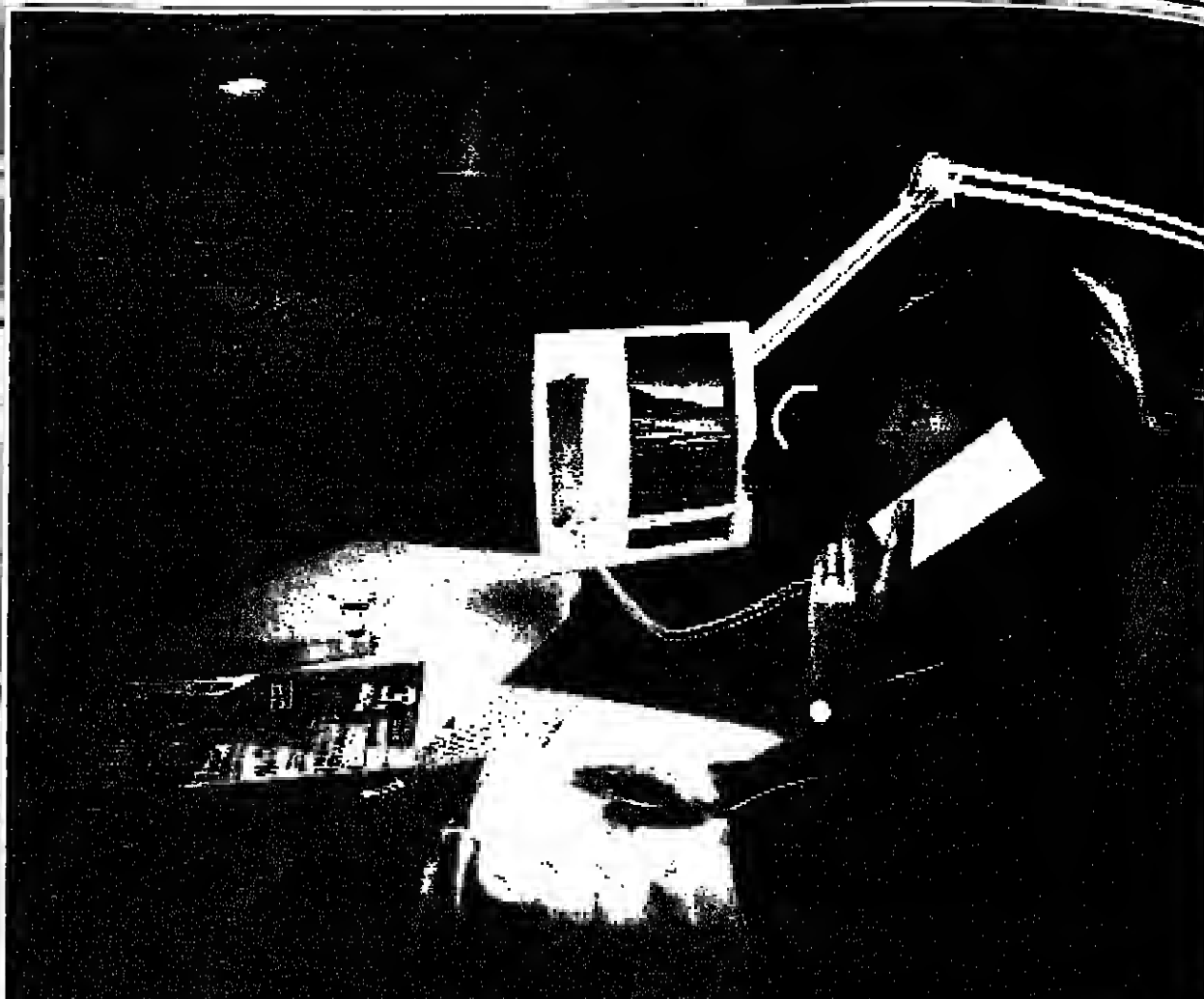
Aviron plans a large trial in healthy working adults this fall, NIH said.

Unlike injectable flu vaccines, which are made from killed virus strains, the nasal spray vaccine is a weakened form of a live virus, which is better at stimulating immunity, NIH said.

The so-called "cold-adapted" vaccine produces good growth of the virus in the nasal passages, which are cooler than other parts of the body, but not in the lungs, which might cause respiratory disease.

The vaccine stimulates mucosal immunity in the nose as well as the rest of the body. "This allows the vaccine to mimic a natural infection and induce immunity without actually causing the disease," NIAID researcher Brian Murphy said.

The spray is being developed under a cooperative research and development agreement between NIAID and Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories ended in 1993.



## Keeping hospital patients happy

By Liz Clark

FOR HOSPITAL patients, the worst problems can include the loneliness of being away from home and the frustration and boredom of having to stay in bed.

Nw a British design company has come up with a communications and entertainment centre that will help keep patients interested and amused, and in touch with friends and relatives.

The Patientline Hospital Bedside Communication Terminal is a telephone, colour television, radio, electronic voice mail and reading light all in one.

It is supported by a counter-balanced arm which is permanently fixed behind the bedhead. Patientline is believed to be the only product in the world that combines all these features in one terminal.

Cambridge Product Design carried out research at a number of hospitals before starting to design and engi-

neer the visual, ergonomic and mechanical details of the terminal. One important feature was the ability of the telephone to be used comfortably by patients whether sitting in a chair or lying flat.

They can also view up to 13 channels on TV, listen to eight radio stations, view selected videos and even order meals.

Patientline has now been installed in two hospitals in the south of England, and 25 more in the U.K. are due to have it soon.

There is no cost to hospitals who have the system. Patients pay for it with a coded smart card bought in the hospital from a vending machine.

The terminal had to be designed with care as it needed to be safe, easy to use, and it had to be able to stand up to wear and tear. It also had to be quick to move away from the patient when necessary — London Press Service.

## Benzene linked to leukaemia and other blood disorders

WASHINGTON (R) — The widespread contaminant benzene was found to increase the risk of leukaemia and other blood disorders in a study of 75,000 Chinese workers, the Journal of the National Cancer Institute reported.

Benzene, which pollutes air and groundwater, comes from numerous industrial sources, cigarette smoke, gasoline and automobile emissions, the journal said in a news release.

"The authors conclude that benzene exposure is associated with a spectrum of hematologic (blood) cancers and related disorders in humans," the news release said. "Risks for these conditions, they said, are elevated at average benzene exposures of less than 10 ppm (parts per million) and show some tendency to rise with increasing exposure."

Since 1987 the National Cancer Institute has collaborated with the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine and its team of researchers in 12 cities to investigate unresolved questions surrounding benzene contaminants and blood

diseases. There has been scientific agreement that benzene causes leukaemia, but questions have remained regarding the link between the level of exposure and the level of risk, the journal said. There also have been questions over the potential association of benzene with other blood disorders.

The study covered 74,828 benzene-exposed workers employed from 1972 to 1987 in 672 Chinese factories. A variety of industries and occupations using benzene were studied, including painting, printing, and the manufacture of footwear, paint and other chemicals.

An unexposed comparison group of 35,805 workers was assembled during the same period in the same 12 cities.

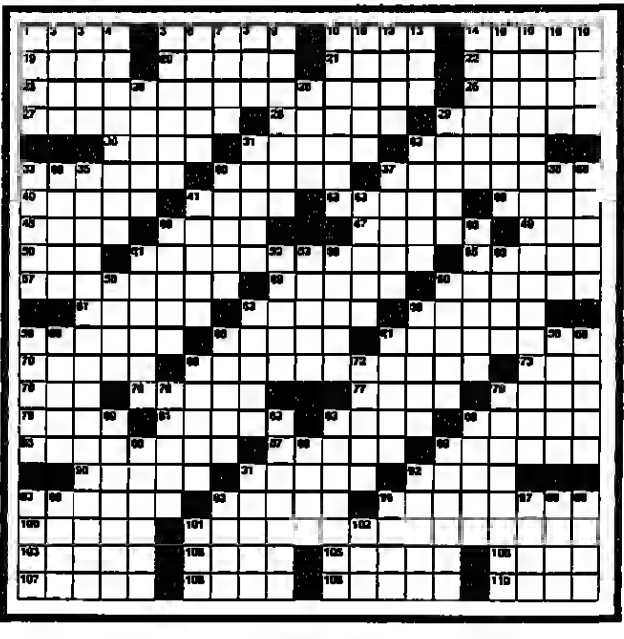
Workers exposed to average levels of benzene had double the risk of the unexposed workers, the journal said. Workers with 10 or more years of benzene exposure had four times the risk of developing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma than did unexposed workers, the journal said.

## WEEKEND CROSSWORD

PLACES IN THE HEART

By Harold B. Counts

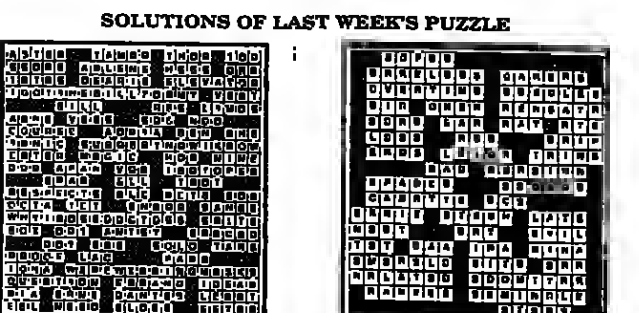
- ACROSS
1. Food
  2. Electronic device
  3. Food fish
  4. Titled thread
  5. Newspaper
  6. Country, briefly
  7. Metaphorical
  8. Hawaiian port
  9. Commence
  10. Where King Kong was
  11. Soviet relative
  12. Intimate
  13. Road overhang
  14. Fish
  15. City in Chile
  16. Sea birds
  17. Peaked
  18. Light-skinned person
- DOWN
1. Secure, usually
  2. Ecolite
  3. Pined leader
  4. Vested features
  5. Hat
  6. Some Penitents
  7. Holiday tune
  8. German
  9. Outcrops
  10. British short word
  11. Tremble
  12. Ticks a long walk
  13. Foamy drink
  14. John = Passos
  15. Heavyweight
  16. Dialect
  17. White pool
  18. Catfish cash
  19. Former wives



Diagramless, 21x21

By Frances Burton

- ACROSS
1. Veggie
  2. Convent
  3. State unity
  4. Elected unit
  5. Converts into cash
  6. Decimate
  7. FBI, n.o.
  8. Last summer
  9. "Clear up"
  10. One of Two Caves
  11. Lugged
  12. Chorus
- DOWN
1. Wash
  2. Passed with flying colors
  3. Avenue
  4. Golf term
  5. Make eye at
  6. Time periods
  7. Series of terms
  8. Scholar's collar
  9. Sleets
  10. She took a long walk
  11. Lament
  12. Leave suddenly



Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Foamy: Many would have faster wallets if they removed all their credit cards.

2. Prospector: naps hot campfire to melt down his few gold nuggets into one larger ingot.

3. How fast your kid, who not so long ago was afraid of the dark, is now the teenager who wants to play out all night!

4. Pot dog dug up old egg in pen, ate it, and got ill.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. JTESB TBBBA TC ABB MEPTSBWE DKSX

LUABO SUSA LKMLJ JTESQOIBAO CTA

ILB DEPPRA ABOL.

2. CHES B JHERUPIV CHS CUVUPS COKER IX

IX JOKER IX EVOKERB EUPUVE ZIV POKER.

3. BYJDV SAE QYOAPJ PRIZXZJWA: "OLRPH

ZJ JSIBOLZXD CABUJXQAV BZPJO-WAUJJ

QBSYO CLRJXOXO TXERP DAUJJ.

4. KYOZ ASGIN BOUNOS SONOA JVV SLRJD

VS JOIGRDA O UGLWY ZDE "JOKE" WORD.

By Ed Budden

## Fat and fit healthier than skinny — expert

LONDON (R) — Being fit is more important for health than being thin, a U.S. researcher told a recent conference.

Obese people who are fit are less likely to die than thin people who do not exercise, Steven Blair, clinical director of the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, said.

He said he knew his research would be controversial, but it meant it could be more important to tell overweight people to exercise than to put them on a diet or on drugs.

"I know we are swimming upstream with this," Dr. Blair told the conference on physical activity and healthy weight management, sponsored by Britain's Health Education Authority and the Association for the Study of Obesity.

"Thinness is fine if you want to be a swimsuit model. It's fine if you don't want to be discriminated against," Dr. Blair concluded. "But if you don't want to die, you're better off to be fit and have a big waist."

Dr. Blair's team studied 25,000 men and 7,000 women aged 20 to 88, with a mean age of 42. They assessed their fitness levels in a laboratory and ranked the least fit one-third as unfit, the next third as moderately fit and the group best able to manage the treadmill test as very fit. Then they watched them for eight years.

Those who were the least fit were twice as likely to die as those who were moderately or very fit. The effect was the same when alcohol consumption, smoking, age, weight and other factors

were taken into consideration.

The effect was also the same regardless of percentage body fat to muscle, total body fat or waist-to-hip ratio — generally considered a measure of "high-risk" fat.

"The amount of fat that these men have does not matter," Dr. Blair said. "What matters is whether they are fit or unfit."

Even the "men with big bellies" had a lower death rate if they were fit than thin, unfit men, Dr. Blair found. He said he hoped other researchers would try to duplicate his findings.

Wim Saris of the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands said exercise was proved to burn off fat and helped counteract the bad effects of dieting — such as a lowered metabolic rate.

It also seemed to change people's appetites — causing them to choose healthier foods, he said.

Dr. Blair said the amount of exercise needed to be "moderately fit" by his team's standards was modest. Walking briskly for half an hour a day — about 3.2 kilometres worth — would do it, he said. "You do not have to be an athlete," he added. "You just have to get out of the bottom — you have to get out of the couch potato category."

But this is the hard part, Peter Fentem and Simon Mockett of the University of Nottingham told the conference. "Few older people report walking at a fairly brisk or fast pace for half an hour," they said.

## ANSWERS

### BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. "Great American Train Robbery" produced in 1903.
2. Myrna Loy.
3. Pathe in 1910
4. They signify that he belongs to the American Society of cinematographers.
5. Robert Taylors.
6. D. W. Griffith is credited with their production.
7. No - Culver City, California.
8. Westems.

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### PUZZLES

#### (A) THE LAST LETTERS

— ANDREW

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#### (B) TWO AT A TIME

— ANTELOPE

## News

### A defense to resh

JERUSALEM (AFP) — Pa...  
faced with a blocked p...  
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## A defensive Arafat prepares to reshuffle his cabinet

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, faced with a blocked peace process with Israel, an administration accused of corruption, and declining popularity, has decided to reshuffle his cabinet.

Many Palestinian analysts fear the reshuffle of the 24-minister cabinet will be merely cosmetic and that Mr. Arafat will not change the way he runs the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Mr. Arafat's spokesman said the Palestinian president will reshuffle the government within the next two weeks for the second time since the Palestinians achieved autonomy in 1994, in order to deal with the "difficult" situation.

The summer has been a rough one for Mr. Arafat, with the outlook for the Palestinian state he fought for decades waning while unhappiness waxed in the West Bank and Gaza strip with the PNA's abuses.

"The political situation is in an impasse and the internal situation is very bad, mainly because of the corruption," said Ali Jerbawi, political science professor at Bir Zeit university on the West Bank.

"The people won't agree to losses on both fronts. The [Palestinian National] Authority can't ignore the population's resentment," he told Agence France Presse (AFP).

Mr. Jerbawi said Mr. Arafat's decision to lift the veil on corruption — more than \$300 million mismanaged last year, or 40 per cent of the PNA's budget, according to an internal audit — was a move in the right direction.

However, by doing this, the Palestinian chief is raising public expectations but hardly has the means to satisfy them, he said. "People expect a major change, and I'm afraid that there won't be any. We would then see even more disillusionment among the population," Mr. Jerbawi said.

Abdul Fatah Hamayel, a Fatah deputy in the Palestinian Legislative Council, said the PNA will be expected to deal seriously with those found guilty of corruption.

"They must get to the bottom of the matter, find those who are guilty and punish them. But I'm afraid that no such thing will occur. We will see a superficial change," Mr. Hamayel predicted. Ghassan Khatib, who heads the independent Palestinian news agency JMCC, said Mr. Arafat "will play musical chairs with his ministers, switching them from one post to another without making any substantial changes, to make people think that he is taking action."

"For the moment, he contents himself with reacting to Israeli demands," Mr. Khatib told AFP.

Mr. Arafat had a senior Palestinian police officer arrested last week after Israel accused the man of planning attacks on settlements.

He has entrusted International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath with the current phase of talks with Israel, pushing aside chief negotiator Saeb Erakat about whom the Israelis have complained. "I think that for Arafat the political agenda [with Israel] is more important than the internal situation, which is potentially very dangerous," Mr. Khatib said.

According to a poll published this month, Mr. Arafat's popularity rating has dropped significantly in the territories, falling below 50 per cent for the first time.

Only 49.5 per cent of those asked said they are satisfied with his actions.

An official commission of inquiry called on Mr. Arafat to dismiss corrupt ministers, but the names of those concerned were not made public.

## Jewish radical group assaults PNA deputy

(Continued from page 1)

anti-Arab group Kach, banned by Israel since 1994.

Five Israelis in a white Subaru car chased Mr. Zaki, a PLC member from Hebron, as he drove past the Gush Etzion bloc of settlements on the Hebron-Jerusalem road, his driver told AFP.

The Israelis pursued Mr. Zaki's car to Gilo, a settlement on Jerusalem's south-east edge, and when they stopped at a red light, "they came out of their car, armed with machine guns," said the driver, Farid Jabalin.

"They beat on the car and tried to drag out Zaki. I got out and scuffled with them. Then the light turned and they got back in their car and drove off," he said.

Mr. Zaki, who was uninjured, continued his route to the West Bank town of Ramallah to attend the weekly session of the PLC. The council issued a statement condemning the attack.

The Front for the Zionist Idea is thought to be made up of former members of Kach, an extreme nationalist group made up mainly of West Bank settlers which was banned after one of its

members, Baruch Goldstein, gunned down 29 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque in 1994.

The group re-emerged into the spotlight last month when one of its members, Tatiana Soskind, 27, plastered Arab shops in Hebron with anti-Islamic posters, sparking riots in the West Bank town.

Soskind, a Russian who emigrated to Israel in 1991, went on trial in an Israeli court two weeks ago wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with Kach's symbol, a fist in a star of David.

Wednesday's incident comes a day after Israeli

soldiers detained four other PLC members, all members of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) faction Fatah.

"We were questioned without explanation and taken to the Beit El military base before we were released," said one of them, Marwan Barghout, the West Bank head of Fatah. He added that they were not interrogated.

Tensions in the West Bank between Palestinians, Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers have mounted in the past week as the freeze in the peace process enters its fifth month.

## Jordan beats Kuwait, qualifies to Pan-Arab Games soccer final

(Continued from page 1)

Wednesday was also a record-breaking day for Jordan in the taekwondo event at the Games with the Kingdom's athletes earning a total of eight medals with 3 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze (see story on page 10).

While the soccer was tied 1-1 at halftime, Jordan was not expected to beat the

favourites Kuwait, a team with an impressive record in Asia and a World Cup qualifier in 1982.

Abdullah Shihyab scored Jordan's two goals to lead 2-1 early in the second half, before Jyres Tadros added the third in the final minutes of the match securing Jordan's lead at 3-1. Kuwait added their second goal later on but conceded defeat and will now play the loser

of tonight's match for 3rd and 4th places.

Eight countries took part in the soccer event. Group 1 included Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Libya while Group 2 included Kuwait, the UAE, Syria and Mauritania.

Only the top two teams in each group qualified to the second round.

Jordan topped Group A and qualified to the second

round after a 3-1 win over Oman. Lebanon joined

them from Group A after beating Libya 2-1 and were joined by Syria and Kuwait from Group 2.

Jordan had scored 1-1 draws with Libya and Lebanon in the first round. The Kingdom's best result in past soccer competitions at the Games was fourth.

## King issues Royal Decree declaring elections on time

(Continued from page 1)

compromise with the opposition before elections were held.

Mr. Thneibat told the Jordan Times after his meeting with Mr. Khasawneh that "the decree falls within the King's constitutional powers and is not in contradiction of a dialogue between the government and the Islamists, if the government is ready to open a dialogue to achieve a solution to the crisis."

According to Mr. Thneibat, the meeting, which took place at the Royal Court, was ordered by the King in order to "assess the real reasons" behind the Muslim Brotherhood's decision not to participate in the elections unless certain conditions were met, and to stress the need for a dialogue between the government and the Islamic opposition "to overcome the current crisis."

Mr. Khasawneh told Mr. Thneibat that His Majesty "hopes that all parties will shoulder their responsibilities and open a dialogue with the government to reach an agreement in the national interest," the Brotherhood's leader said in the telephone interview.

Mr. Thneibat said he reiterated to the Royal Court chief that various reasons contributed to his movement's decision. He listed them as: 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the normalisation of ties with the Jewish state, economic reforms undertaken by previous governments — based on the privatisation process — and restrictions recently imposed on public freedoms — mainly freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of the press.

Mr. Khasawneh reportedly said he would relay the Brotherhood's explanations to the King.

The meeting broke a deadlock in talks between the two parties which had become apparent earlier in the day, when Islamist insiders expressed scepticism that a dialogue between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood could lead to the movement rescinding its boycott decision.

"The decision to boycott was discussed at all levels, before being ratified by the Council of Thirty," (the Brotherhood's decision-making body), a Muslim Brotherhood spokesperson said yesterday, before the Royal Court meeting took place.

"It is too late now, to revoke it," he asserted. The Brotherhood spokesperson, Imad Abu Diah, said that "it was not a matter of one or two temporary laws: The current crisis requires an overall reassessment of the government's policies and strategies."

"Even if the government withdrew the amendments to the Press and Publications Law — introduced in May by a temporary law — I do not think we would rescind our decision (to boycott)," said Mr. Abu Diah, who is a member of the Brotherhood's Executive Committee.

An informed source disclosed that the Brotherhood's leaders were "offended" by the way in which the government carried out a rapprochement

initiative on Tuesday.

Dr. Majali reportedly delegated his press advisor to make contacts with the Brotherhood in order to soften its stands.

The source said the Brotherhood's leaders judged the government's move as "inadequate to the seriousness of the crisis" and would have preferred the premier to follow up the talks personally.

After the Royal Court meeting, Mr. Thneibat convened a meeting of the Brotherhood's Executive Committee.

Details of the long meeting, which was protracted until night, were not disclosed.

Before the last elections, held in 1993, the Muslim Brotherhood had threatened to boycott in protest against the one-person, one-vote system, introduced by a temporary law shortly before the polls.

## Israeli Arab attacker of British teens in hospital

(Continued from page 1)

assailant. "Suddenly, a driver came out of the car holding a sword in one hand and a commando knife in another. He swiped at several people and even hit a few," Mr. Consul told the radio.

"When I arrived at the entrance to one of the

restaurants, I pointed a gun at him and said, 'stop police get on the floor'."

Tel Aviv district police commander, Shlomo Aharonishki, said the man came from the Galilee town of Nazareth.

"He is not cooperating with us at present," Mr. Aharonishki said. "The only thing he says is that he

doesn't know what happened and can't remember what happened."

A man identified by Israel's army radio as the attacker's brother denied media reports that he was a Muslim extremist.

"This is something that's really shocked us and the background to it is not nationalist. This is simply a

man who has a few problems at home with the family and I think that's what led him to do this," he told the radio.

The man was scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday, but the hearing was cancelled because he was in hospital.

## Israel, PNA tone down peacemaking optimism

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Netanyahu's media adviser David Bar-Ilan said cooperation with the Palestinians was "discussible but we need more action on terrorism."

Israel has arrested four Palestinian policemen who it alleged were involved in planning attacks against Jewish settlers. Palestinian security officials have arrested a senior PLO police officer in the West Bank.

Mr. Bar-Ilan said Israel and the PLO were likely to continue along what has been termed an informal track of discussions on the ports, passage and an official lifting of an Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I assume that sooner or later these talks, whether they will be announced as formal talks or as informal talks will produce results and I think both sides are interested," he said.

But PLO negotiator Has-

san Asfour, speaking at a news conference in the West Bank town of Al Bireh, said, "there is a major political crisis and it is over the land. These contacts do not solve the crisis."

The discussions skirt the big issue of Jewish settlement on territory captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and Mr. Netanyahu's proposal to move immediately into negotiations on a permanent peace accord with the

PLO. Mr. Asfour said it had been agreed that Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Palestinian Cabinet Minister Nabil Shaath would meet to discuss the work of three committees on the Gaza airport and seaport and the West Bank-Gaza corridor.

"Until now only the airport committee has been working and Israel is talking only about a third of the issues on this committee's agenda," Mr. Asfour said.

## Israel votes for bill against withdrawing from Golan

(Continued from page 1)

opposition MPs then stormed out of the house.

One opposition MP said he voted in favour by mistake and another abstained instead of voting against the bill.

Parliamentary speaker Dan Tichon said he would decide within the next 24 hours whether to call a new vote.

The bill, proposed by an MP from the Ultra-Nationalist Tsomet Party, Eliezer Zandberg, says that parliament cannot decide on any territorial concession on the Golan without the approval of two-thirds of members.

"The existing law concerning the Golan cannot be modified without a special majority of 80 deputies," the bill said, referring to a December 1981 law extending Israeli civil law on to the Golan.

Damascus demands an Israeli pledge to hand over the Golan before any resumption in peace talks, saying that before negotiations broke down the previous Labour government had committed to return the plateau to Syria.

But Mr. Netanyahu insists that the Syrians return to the negotiating table without any preconditions and the government envisages

only minor territorial concessions in exchange for peace.

The Labour opposition is in principle in favour of a withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace, but has not committed to restore the entire plateau to Syria.

Mr. Netanyahu pledged during celebrations staged by settlers last week to mark the 30th anniversary of Israel's occupation of the Golan that the future of the plateau lay with Israel.

"The Golan is being developed non-stop and it is our intention to continue on that path," Mr. Netanyahu said during his first visit to

the Golan since he came to power 13 months ago.

"The destiny of this land cannot be dissociated with that of Israel."

Syria responded by accusing the hardline Israeli premier of distorting history.

"The Golan has been Syrian since the dawn of time and it will stay that way whether the Zionists like it or not," the official newspaper Tishrin said.

In addition to around 16,000 Jewish settlers, some 16,000 Syrian Druze live on the Golan who have all refused to take Israeli nationality.

## Palestine Airlines land first flight in Amman

(Continued from page 1)

we will debate the security differences and the civilian details which include customs, passports and immigration. If Israeli intentions are true, I believe that the Gaza International Airport protocol will be finalised in less than a month," the Palestinian official said.

"But still we have to go further to negotiate the security issue and civil affairs, and after that, there will be a lot of things to do to reach the point where we can sign the protocol," he said.

"For Palestinians, the airport is the most important symbol of a Palestinian state. The movement of transport, cargo, passengers and tourists, all of these are important to the Palestinians," Brig. Zaidan emphasised.

Head of the Jordan Civil Aviation Authority, Jassir Zayad told reporters that Palestine Airlines will "temporarily" operate two flights daily from Al Arish in the Sinai.

"I hope that our Palestinian brothers will be able to operate their flights directly from the Gaza strip which would enhance cooperation between both sides," Mr. Zayad said during the official ceremony welcoming

the landing of the first Palestinian flight.

Jordan was the first country to allow PA to operate its flight into its capital and we hope that the number of flights will be increased soon," Mr. Zayad added.

Emad Qablawi, the captain of the plane, said the PA, which owns two Fokker-50 planes donated by the Dutch government, has 10 pilots who will operate flights into Greece, Istanbul, Cairo, Jeddah and Amman adding that two more jets will join the PA fleet when operations start at Gaza-Airport.

He said that PA has not received Tel Aviv's permission to fly its planes en route to Jordan. During their trip to Amman, they used "a circular route that includes flying over Al Arish. Then south towards Taba and Nuweibeh in Egypt in order to fly over the Red Sea and enter Jordanian air space."

"If Israel allows us to operate from the Gaza Strip, the duration of the flight between Gaza and Amman will not exceed 30 minutes instead of the 85-minute journey that we have to take from Al Arish," Mr. Qablawi noted.

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With soft, flexible microfins for the closest shave ever

Gillette  
The Razor Man Can Get



## Jordan, Iran agree to launch joint ventures, speed up cooperation

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and Iran Wednesday agreed to launch joint ventures and speed up economic cooperation, trade officials from both sides announced.

"We have reviewed existing economic relations and ties between our two countries. We have prepared the ground for the upcoming meeting of the joint economic committee planned for October," Trade and Industry Minister Hani Mulki said following his meeting with his Iranian counterpart Mohammed Rida Nimat Zada.

Mr. Zada's visit paves the way for the meeting of the two ministers in Tehran next October, when a trade protocol is expected to be signed.

"We have also agreed to

hold some technical meetings between now and October in the field of marine transport, telecommunications and tourism," Dr. Mulki said in a joint press conference.

The minister said that the Kingdom has welcomed an initiative by Iran to invest in the fertilizer industry in Jordan, adding that "we hope that by the time we meet in October that this will come to fruition."

Dr. Mulki also welcomed the preparation of documents related to the protection of investors and double taxation. A team would be sent to Tehran to discuss the main points of these issues in order to conclude an agreement.

Mr. Zada said Iran has expressed willingness to enter into joint ventures in trade and industry. Two such projects have been

finalised, he said.

"We have discussed new agreements that have already started, such as in tourism, culture, land and sea transportation," Mr. Zada added.

"We hope both sides will come to final agreement to start direct flights from Amman to Tehran," the Iranian minister said.

Mr. Zada said Iran is planning an exhibition of Iranian products. "Hopefully we can do that in over six or seven months," he said.

The minister emphasised that the two sides have finalised joint venture in the petrochemical industry to produce phosphoric acid and phosphoric fertilisers whereby at least 50 per cent can be supplied by the Iranian side.

"All this industrial and trade cooperation will have

full support of the Iranian government," Mr. Zada added.

The volume of trade between the two countries last year reached \$29 million; \$20 million in Iranian exports to the Kingdom and \$9 million in imports from Jordan, Mr. Zada said.

The two ministers said they saw no problems with respect to trade exchange between the two countries.

But "we have seen some technical impediments in terms of banking, and we have agreed that we will resolve this by the time we meet in Tehran," Dr. Mulki said.

"By the time we meet we will have something very good to show for the record that our trade has grown to levels we consider very comfortable," Dr. Mulki said.

## Israel approves 800m shekel '97 budget cuts

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli cabinet approved an 800 million shekel cut in the 1997 budget after a stormy meeting that stretched into the early hours of Wednesday.

The cabinet voted 12-4 in favour of the cuts proposed by the treasury with some adjustments put forward by Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu.

The cuts included 600 million shekels from general operating budgets, 180 million shekels to make up for Israel's agreement to transfer \$50 million in U.S. aid to Jordan, and 20 million shekels to fund distribution of gas masks to the public.

In the session described by

observers as turbulent, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai walked out in protest against cuts in defence spending.

Instead of an across-the-board 0.6 per cent cut in all ministry budgets, cuts in the labour and welfare, education and health ministries were cut by 0.4 per cent while cuts in

other ministries were increased to 1.1 per cent.

The defence ministry cut was preserved at 0.6 per cent.

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, speaking to reporters after the vote, expressed satisfaction with the result.

### HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1997

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to forget about any difficulties which have been bothering you and have some fun. You should not be afraid to speak, however be careful what you say as you could hurt someone's feelings.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Set aside some time today to revise your budget, thereby you will have some extra funds in an emergency. If you need some advice to do this, listen only to qualified professionals who have your best interest in mind.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Get rid of self-imposed limitations which are keeping you from realising your full potential for success. Maintain an optimistic attitude all day today and thereby you can tackle any situation which is present.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) You have been concentrating too much on personal wishes lately, and you should make more practical plans for the days ahead. Later this evening will be good for meeting with fellow associates and make a plan of action.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You have been very busy wrapping up the week's business affairs, however today it's time to turn your attention to personal and romantic matters. Later this evening will be good for taking your mate to a special location.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Stop toying around with crazy new ideas and get-rich-schemes today, and stick with more reliable methods of operation. Be sure to drive carefully while on the highway thereby avoiding any difficult situations.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Contact some cre-

ative friends today who will be inspiring to you, thereby getting you out of that rut. You should not allow anyone get you down or you could say something which you could later regret in the days ahead.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Get any long-standing agreements finished up and out of the way today, thereby you can proceed to other more pressing business activities. Relax and be happy at home with your mate later this evening and have a wonderful time together.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Get together with some old friends today you haven't seen for quite a long time for some entertainment which you both will enjoy, however you should not be extravagant or you could be short of funds when they are necessary.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Get together socially with some fellow associates today whom you don't know too well, and you can become friends. Maintain a positive attitude towards career activities and you can become successful through your efforts.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You have kept yourself tied down at home for a long time, however this is a good day today to get out and about in the world and discover what it offers you. Don't stay out too late, though since you do need your rest.

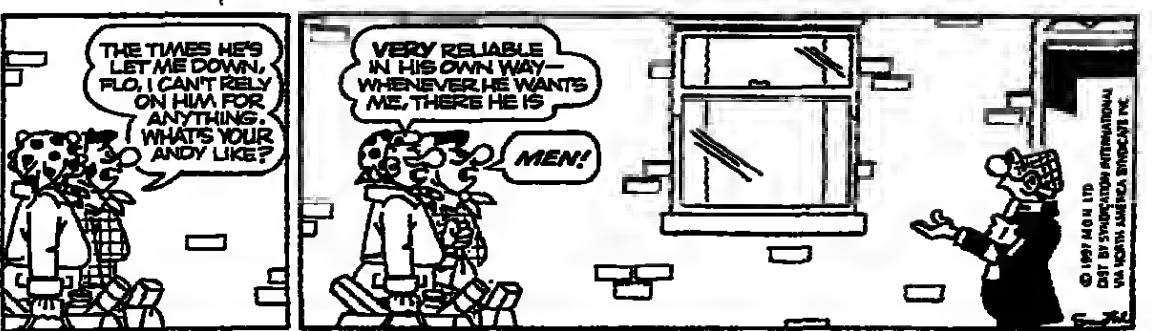
**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Enjoy the comforts of your home and loved ones today. A small gathering of close friends could only add to the pleasant, congenial atmosphere which exists there and which should be thoroughly enjoyed.

Birthstone of July: Pearl — Ruby — Tiger's Eye

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n' Jeff



Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Prices as at 23/07/97 20:13									
US Dollar	0.8967	1.7044	0.8118	1.4448	118.73	1.3880	1679.80	1.9172	0.7407
DE Mark	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867	0.5867
GB Sterling	1.5881	2.7875	2.3838	194.14	2.2885	2747.46	3.1385	3.3885	3.3885
CH Franc	0.8821	117.87	0.8228	0.8228	0.8228	0.8228	0.8228	0.8228	0.8228
JP Yen	0.0084	1.4353	0.5145	1.2185	1.1684	14.14	101.38	4.8316	4.8316
CA Dollar	0.7206	1.2215	0.4415	1.1097	1.17	1206.45	1.3728	2.1189	2.1189
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0141	0.3635	0.8889	1416.43	0.8255	11.40	3.4130	3.4130
NL Guilder	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214	0.3214
FR Franc	0.1742	0.2870	0.1088	25.1635	28.87	0.2418	33.40	33.4000	33.4000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
US Dollar	0.7088	3.7504	0.3770	3.8402	0.3027	3.8728	1338.00	3.3880	3.3880
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	0.2972	0.3324	0.3415	0.4275	0.3476	2172.32	1.7835	1.7835
GB Sterling	0.2885	0.1888	0.1003	0.37	0.3807	0.38	410.09	0.3028	0.3028
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8781	0.8483	0.8483	0.8483	0.8483	0.8483	0.8483	0.8483
Omani Dinar	0.2747	0.1845	1.0303	1.0303	0.8831	1.01	422.00	0.5302	0.5302
Yemeni Dinar	3.3041	2.3385	12.3819	1.3488	12.38	32.14	500.75	0.5302	0.5302
Emirati Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	0.1025	0.9911	0.8831	410.09	0.3028	0.3028
Lebanese Lira	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006
Egyptian	0.2983	0.2091	1.0705	0.1113	1.0751	0.8894	1.0847	484.22	484.22

Energy									
Brent	19.90	19.90							
WTI	21.05	21.05							
Bonny	18.90	18.90							
Dubai	18.90	18.90							
UL Gas	192.00	192.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4546	0.16305	0.38545	0.16738	0.38545	0.16738	0.38545	0.16738
AE Dirham	1.2723	0.6419	0.1665	0.3039	0.1665	0.3039	0.1665	0.3039	0.1665
KW Dinar	3.3041	0.8335	2.62061	4.77655	382.465	382.465	382.465	382.465	382.465
BR Dinar	0.3770	4.32244	1.82204	1.82204	1.82204	1.82204	1.82204	1.82204	1.82204
CY Pound	1.5847	3.3485	1.2001	2.8367	233.284	233.284	233.284	233.284	233.284

Metal Prices									
Gold (oz)	348.1	348.1							
Silver (oz)	4.47	4.46							
Platinum (oz)	382.75	382.75							
AL (3 Months)	1663	1663							
CU (3 Months)	2412	2412							
ZINC (3 Months)	1325	1327							
Lead (3 Months)	615	615							
NI (3 Months)	7755	7755							

Currency Deposit Rates (%)									
USD	5.58	5.75	5.43	6.43	6.13				
GBP	8.25	6.40	6.36	6.36	6.36				
JPY	0.48	0.58	0.48	0.58	0.58				
DEM	3.03	3.09	3.13	3.13	3.13				
FRF	3.20	3.30	3.35	3.35	3.40				
CHF	7.83	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72				
ITL	6.83	6.75	6.72	6.58	6.58				

JOD Cross Rates									
US Dollar	0.7088	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1535	1.1535							
DE Mark	0.4188	0.4188							
CH Franc	0.8821	0.8821							
FR Franc	0.1237	0.1243							
JP Yen	0.8821	0.8821							
NL Guilder	0.3705	0.3724							
IT Lira	0.4214	0.4235							

## THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Sandy's bark
- Quick breaths
- Monetary head
- Grande
- Geometric paintings
- Urbane
- Prosperous times
- Crude transport
- Plague
- Legal postponement
- Bacterium
- Uncivilized one
- Classic Ford
- Soybean, for one
- Sample tapes
- Flute for marches
- Traveled by dugout
- Nettle
- Loan sharks
- June 14 observance
- Poor grade
- Big Bird's street
- Inactive
- Sandwich shops
- Friend via letter
- Spongy mushroom
- "Gunsmoke" star
- To-do
- Cut with a hatchet
- Concluded
- Senester
- Cobb and Herdin
- Arak ruler
- Obscene riches
- Norse poetry collection
- Church service
- Crude source
- Uttered
- Polk's predecessor
- Cravat
- Elmer of cartoons
- "Ah, yes"
- "Dream a Little Dream"
- Actress
- Verdugo
- He: it

DOWN

- Vacation isle
- Mature
- Crude, e.g.
- Attend without a date
- Behemoth
- In abundance
- Spontaneous performance, briefly
- Orison
- Brit. flyers
- Are living
- 31D penthouse
- Discourteous
- Mare offspring
- Milano money
- Wee water plant
- Bargain
- Comp. pt.
- Tumple: abbr.

CARP	AMEN	SCRAP
ARIA	GOAT	CHILE
PETTYCASH	RINSE	
ONE	ERNE	BECKON
NASSAU	SPEAK	
MRED	ARMENIA	
CLEAN	RARE	MORN
HOWL	PIVOT	FRET
ABEL	REEL	LEASE
PORCHES	ERIE	
HOSTS	ANDREW	
ROMANS	LATE	ONO
OVINE	PALTRY	YSUM
BANGS	ETAL	DFRE
SLEET	GENE	SEEN

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## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Cairo Amman Bank plans Jordan, West Bank expansion

**JORDAN'S CAIRO Amman Bank** said Tuesday it would double its capital to 20 million dinars (\$28.2 million) by year-end and aimed to expand in domestic and regional markets. Bank officials said the bank's board will call for an extraordinary general assembly by September to approve the capital rise to meet central bank minimum capital requirements.

The rise will be covered by capitalising five million dinars from reserves and distributing a half share bonus while the remaining five million would be raised by a private placement to shareholders. But one bank official said Cairo Amman Bank had not ruled out issuing a Global Depository Receipt (GDR) to help raise the capital. The bank was also studying foreign shareholding for the next capital increase to 25-30 million dinars during 1998-1999 as it expands its operations in both the domestic and Palestinian market, where it has the largest network of branches.

A bank official said it aimed to add another four branches to the 38 existing branches in Jordan. West Bank expansion depended on progress in Palestinian self-rule, but the bank was also looking at getting a foothold in Egypt and Cyprus. Cairo-Amman Bank is one of three Jordanian banks, Arab Bank and Bank of Jordan, which between them hold over 80 per cent of the \$1.5 billion deposits in the banking sector in Palestinian self-rule areas, where numerous Jordanian banks have offshoots.

Bankers said the bank has expanded its market share in the territories, captured by Israel in 1967, even after its eight-year banking monopoly over the West Bank ended in 1994. The bank operates 16 branches and three Islamic banking branches in the West Bank and Gaza that are estimated to constitute over 40 per cent of the bank's total operations.

Cairo Amman Bank's 1996 net profits fell to 3.7 million dinars from 1995's 4.8 million dinars, which was after it paid 3.5 million dinars in overdue taxes against 1.5 million dinars. But its 1996 pre-tax profits rose 14 per cent to 7.3 million dinars against 1995's 6.4 million amid steady growth in commercial and investment activities. It also boosted in 1996 its bad debt allocation by 2.3 million dinars to 16.8 million dinars as it virtually resolved a legacy of doubtful loans by building up adequate provisions. The bank's improved profitability outlook is underpinned by a pickup in business activity in both Jordan and Palestinian self-rule areas, lower debt provisions and a significant shift towards higher yield loan portfolio structure. Cairo Amman Bank has already posted JD6 million of pre-tax profits in the first half 1997 and targets to double it by year-end, its chairman Khalil Talhouni said. Cairo Amman Bank's total assets in 1996 rose 16.7 per cent to 700 million dinars. Customer deposits jumped in 1996 to 581 million dinars against 516 million dinars in 1995. Its total loan portfolio stood at 283.2 million dinars at end of 1996, posting a small 3.3 per cent rise in loans against the previous year as the bank continues to pursue a conservative policy to help it overcome an old bad debt problem. The bank's corporate portfolio investments rose in 1996 to 25.8 million dinars against 18.5 million dinars in 1995. Its major institutional shareholders include Egypt's Banque de Caire with a 10 per cent stake along with a similar 10 per cent by Jordan's government. Private investors Khalil Talhouni and Sabeeh Al Masri own at least 40 per cent (Reuters).

## Central Bank governor estimates capital inflows at \$300m during first half of '97

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuters

**AMMAN** — Jordan's capital inflows hit a record \$300 million in the first half of this year, Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz said.

"On the foreign investments level, the capital inflows are increasing and are estimated to have reached, since the start of the year until the first half, about \$300 million," Dr. Fariz told businessmen at a private dinner on Tuesday.

Dr. Fariz, in a speech obtained by Reuters Wednesday, said that inflows should rise substantially by year-end as investors, heartened by

groundbreaking economic decisions taken this year, were expected to embark on more joint ventures and step-up purchases of Jordanian stock.

The Central Bank's elimination of restrictions on foreign currency transfers earlier this month removed a major hurdle to foreign capital inflows by sending a strong signal of confidence, Dr. Fariz said.

Jordan's stock market saw over \$56 million of foreign purchases in the first half of 1997, both from Arab investors and global foreign emerging funds, Dr. Fariz said the trend was expected to grow as remaining foreign ownership restrictions

are due to be finally eliminated soon.

Prudged by global funds, the banking sector in Jordan is also witnessing an influx of Saudi and Kuwaiti funds unseen since the Gulf crisis to tap opportunities from Jordanian banks seeking to raise their capital base.

Dr. Fariz said these substantial inflows have helped foreign currency cash reserves, which have already topped a 1997 target of \$1.15 billion after ending 1996 at \$697 million.

Central Bank officials, who say reserves are now close to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) three months import cover figure, say \$1.5 billion by year-end

was now in sight.

Dr. Fariz told bankers the healthy reserve reflected progress in IMF-directed economic reforms, helping Jordan to be on track to attain a 6.5 per cent growth rate this year against a lower 5.2 per cent rate the previous year.

Signs of stronger performance since the start of 1997 include a 19 per cent rise in remittances by expatriates, a 10.5 per cent rise in the value of earnings of the main export industries and a four per cent rise in tourism receipts.

Comfortable reserves encouraged the Central Bank last month to ease the tight grip on monetary poli-

cy which since mid-1993 had drained excess liquidity and supported the currency, Dr. Fariz said.

But Dr. Fariz said bankers should not expect wide fluctuations in interest rates despite the introduction of a more market-sensitive interest rate mechanism in June, which pushed key benchmark rates down around one percentage point.

"Although we have left setting interest rates to market forces, the Central Bank is still capable of influencing interest rate levels through the CD (certificates of deposit) auctions and prevent undesired fluctuations," Dr. Fariz said that the

Central Bank would continue to fine-tune its monetary policy to ensure growth of healthy reserves on one side while ensuring sufficient liquidity to support an expansion in the economy.

This would be attained by a substantially higher money supply growth target of around 8-9 per cent by year-end, which effectively means that banks will be able to lend more.

Bankers expect this to activate some sluggish sectors hurt by a tight monetary policy which made borrowing costs prohibitively expensive for some industries and hampered growth.

## South East Asian tourism officials see silver lining in currency clouds

SINGAPORE (AFP) —

South East Asian tourism officials have portrayed a sharp fall in regional currencies as an opportunity to boost arrivals, thanks to cheaper holidays for North American, Japanese and other tourists.

Paisan Wangsal, director for international relations of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, said the Thai baht's sharp fall will allow foreign tourists to "stretch their dollars in our country."

"We do hope that this development... will help in terms of bringing more overseas tourists," Mr. Paisan told journalists after a meeting of national tourism organisations from the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. All except Vietnam, whose economy is relatively closed, have seen their currencies fall sharply against the U.S. dollar in recent weeks.

Mr. Paisan said Thailand registered 7.19 million arrivals in 1996, generating \$8.2 billion in tourism revenues. Arrivals are forecast to rise seven per cent this year, he said.

Thailand floated the baht on July 2, triggering a sharp drop in its value and prompting overseas speculators to test its neighbours' currencies as well. The baht has so far fallen about 16 per cent against the U.S. dollar.

The Philippines followed suit on July 11, with the peso falling seven per cent since. The Malaysian ringgit, the Indonesian rupiah and even the once rock-solid Singapore dollar have also

plunged against the greenback.

Daniel Corpuz, executive director of the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp., said his country's tourism industry "would like to consider this particular move as an opportunity similar to that of Thailand."

The Philippines earned \$2.7 billion from 2.04 million arrivals in 1996, he said. "We intend to further this contribution within the year by a conservative growth rate of something like eight to 10 per cent and hopefully increase foreign exchange earnings to almost \$3 billion," he added.


Adrian Lee, director for international marketing of the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board, said "our product is always very good value for money," adding that the Malaysian ringgit's fall "will enhance the value of our product."

He said Malaysia welcomed 7.14 million visitors in 1996, and they pumped \$4.5 billion into the economy.

The tourism sector contributes about 4.5 per cent of ASEAN members' joint gross national product, according to the officials.

ASEAN is now collectively the world's fifth most popular tourist destination, ahead of such places as Britain, China, Mexico, Canada and Germany, they said in a joint statement.

In 1995, arrivals in ASEAN reached 29.6 million while receipts reached \$27.6 billion. Arrivals reached close to 31 million in 1996, the officials said, but total revenues for the year were not immediately available.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET												
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SYRIASAT												
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 407179												
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 23/07/1997												
PART 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QTY.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE			
INDEX	LOW			SHARES	TRANS.	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE				
298.000	214.500	ARAB BANK	13.3	1.38	18	460	132210	190.00	289.50	-50.00	-01	
N 2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	14	3772	7842	2.09	2.08	-01	-01	
1.210	.850	NIC. EAST INV. BK.	61.1	0.00	2	450	419	.94	.93	-01	-01	
2.480	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.2	7.65	10	4671	10295	2.70	2.21	-01	-01	
5.200	4.400	THE HOUSING BK.	14.6	3.96	3	270	1221	4.90	4.90	00	00	
4.100	2.440	JOR. FUNDING BK.	10.2	0.00	2	1050	2994	2.82	2.87	-02	-02	
1.050	.700	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	8.97	14	29300	22844	.78	.78	00	00	
3.480	3.050	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.8	3.08	19	14956	46914	3.95	3.89	-06	-06	
1.800	1.110	JOHNSON RE. INV. TRAD.	26.2	0.00	4	310	1999	1.37	1.36	-01	-01	
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. FUND BANK	20.8	0.00	3	2200	7089	3.22	3.24	-02	-02	
1.000	1.460	BEIT AL-MAL (BEITMAL)	7	13.16	1	450	513	1.14	1.14	00	00	
1.440	.850	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	8	4300	4110	.98	.96	-01	-01	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 214.46 %CHG: -0.18 98 58771 235027												
3.000	2.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	12.0	5.36	3	13029	33681	2.80	2.80	00	00	
2.260	1.590	JOR. PRINCE INSUR.	4.5	12.50	2	1100	2760	1.60	1.60	00	00	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 113.79 %CHG: 0.00 5 13129 35441												
1.820	1.500	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.0	6.06	3	3711	6158	1.66	1.65	-01	-01	
1.580	.930	MATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	43	55250	78558	1.44	1.43	-01	-01	
1.010	.820	JOR. WORTED MILLS	9.3	3.45	2	350	2030	5.80	5.80	00	00	
0.810	.480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	26.2	0.00	1	2300	14477	3.95	3.95	00	00	
1.890	1.370	MID. EAST HOTELS	18.0	0.00	3	2500	2943	1.20	1.18	-02	-02	
3.720	2.890	JOR. INTL. INV. EDUC.	7.7	0.00	12	7900	23450	2.97	2.97	00	00	
1.220	.930	ZARBA EDUCATION	5.8	0.00	1	900	513	.95	.94	-01	-01	
2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.51	2	500	848	1.69	1.69	00	00	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.16 %CHG: -0.33 67 72911 113070												
4.450	3.100	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	27.2	2.72	18	5327	23506	4.04	4.04	00	00	
10.250	9.040	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.4	9.15	18	4203	40721	9.71	9.71	00	00	
1.670	1.050	MOJIB INDUSTRIES	10.3	8.40	2	300	358	1.20	1.19	-01	-01	
7.150	5.800	JOR. WORTED MILLS	9.3	3.45	2	350	2030	5.80	5.80	00	00	
4.100	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	10.9	5.06	12	3663	14477	3.95	3.95	00	00	
1.820	1.310	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	16.4	6.04	2	1300	1716	1.32	1.32	00	00	
10.250	5.000	ARAB CHEM. DISTR.	16.6	5.56	2	133	710	5.15	5.10	-05	-05	
4.660	4.300	DAR ALDAMA INV. INV.	13.1	4.67	1	20000	10700	5.45	5.25	-20	-20	
3.850	2.400	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.8	10.16	7	2250	9535	2.46	2.46	00	00	
.960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	16	14550	6693	.46	.46	00	00	
1.310	1.000	ARAB EXPOR. CORP. TRD.	31.2	0.00	17	23100	27160	1.02	1.02	00	00	
1.520	.920	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	300	273	.92	.91	-01	-01	
.770	.530	NATIONAL INDUS.	9	0.00	4	11000	5630	.52	.51	-01	-01	
1.300	.510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	22	15550	8279	.54	.54	00	00	
.990	.530	JOR. ROCKWELL INDUS.	9	0.00	13	8702	4724	.53	.58	+03	+03	
2.980	1.550	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	14.0	6.45	3	650	1005	1.55	1.55	00	00	
3.080	2.130	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	40.1	0.00	30	18300	8750	2.50	2.50	00	00	
.940	.520	JOR. SUIPRO-CHEN	9	0.00	1	300	273	.92	.91	-01	-01	
1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.4	5.15	2	600	816	1.36	1.36	00	00	
2.020	1.080	UNIV. MOON INDUS.	9	0.00	8	3150	3611	1.08	1.08	00	00	
1.510	1.000	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	13.9	9.71	17	6300	6517	1.04	1.03	-01	-01	
1.600	1.300	NATL. CHELORINE	12.9	5.11	7	4210	6765	1.38	1.37	-01	-01	
1.070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.4	0.00	3	1400	1776	.83	.84	-01	-01	
2.090	1.240	EL. TAY READY WEAR	47.9	0.00	1	300	408	1.35	1.36	-01	-01	
1.310	1.000	INTL. TOBACCO	6.2	0.00	4	6000	6840	1.14	1.14	00	00	
1.240	.860	UNION CH. & WEG.	40.9	0.00	3	1800	1620	.90	.90	00	00	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 124.92 %CHG: -0.04 216 138968 194407												
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 165.73 %CHG: -0.13 386 283779 578745												
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 23/07/1997												
PART 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QTY.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE			
INDEX	LOW			SHARES	TRANS.	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE				
.660	.410	JOR. TRADE FNC.	11.7	0.00	14	45750	20320	.44	.44	00	00	
N 950	.540	JOR. FIB. INV. CO.	9	0.00	46	66172	40603	.61	.61	00	00	
.840	.660	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	1	5000	950	.70	.69	-01	-01	
.620	.370	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	11	77550	1213	.45	.44	-01	-01	
N 950	.720	AL-SHARQ INV. 75%	9	0.00	2	1250	688	.79	.80	-01	-01	
N 950	.610	AL-DAMIRIA 75%	61.4	0.00	7	18050	7040	.63	.64	-01	-01	
.730	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	2	2050	1046	.51	.51	00	00	
.570	.380	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	44.9	0.00	5	9700	3953	.40	.39	-01	-01	
.720	.450	MATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	1	250	110	.45	.44	-01	-01	
.720	.450	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	9	0.00	22	50600	24482	.50	.50	00	00	
.830	.710	JORDAN STEEL	32.1	0.00	16	11650	8727	.72	.71	-01	-01	
.580	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	1	5000	2500	.50	.50	00	00	
.730	.600	HIGHEST PHARM. 75%	9	0.00	1	500	180	.61	.61	00	00	
.670	.550	NATL. PHARM. 85%	9	0.00	16	15000	6995	.57	.59	+02	+02	
.600	.500	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	1	5000	950	.70	.69	-01	-01	
.860	.750	INDUS. CERAMIC	19.7	0.00	5	8800	6600	.75	.78	00	00	
.820	.590	MATL. POLYESTER	8	0.00	1	1000	60	.62	.61	-01	-01	
N 1.000	.730	AL-SHARQ INVEST. 75%	9	0.00	7	1250	688	.79	.80	-01	-01	
.870	.590	NIC. EAST COMPLEX	8.1	15.15	14	15500	10215	.66	.66	00	00	
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 165.73 %CHG: -0.13 386 283779 578745												
+ New 12 months low												
+ Limited during the past 12 months												
+ W/E value is 100 or more												



# Taekwondo team clinches 3 golds, 3 silver, 2 bronze

## Majaj takes bronze in 200-metre butterfly

By Aileen Bannayan  
and JSYIF  
press committee

THE KINGDOM'S taekwondo team started their competition on a confident and impressive note Wednesday adding eight more medals while Hana Majaj added another bronze in swimming making up for, otherwise disappointing results by her teammates on the 11th day of the 8th Pan-Arab Games currently underway in Beirut.

In the women's event, Zaha Talhouni and Alisar Matar took golds for Jordan as Nancy Hindi took silver and Fatima Sayyad bronze.

In the men's competition, Hussein Taleh took gold, Rashed Naji and Mohammad Abul Ruz silver and Shadi Abu Taleb bronze.

In the 200-metres butterfly, Majaj finished with a time of 2:32.13 seconds behind Algeria's first place winner Kinzab Ben Nasser who finished with a time of 2:28 seconds and Egypt's Lanya Fuad took the silver with a time of 2:29 seconds.

In soccer, Jordan beat Kuwait 3-2 to qualify for the final (see story on page 1).

Wednesday's nine medals brought Jordan's medals tally up to 27, with 7 gold, 7 silver and 13 bronze medals.

The Kingdom's boxing, athletics and taekwondo teams secured most of the medals taking 18 out of 27 medals so far and making it

the most successful Jordanian participation in the Pan-Arab Games to date.

The boxing team won two gold medals by Mohammad Abu Khadijeb and Ayman Al Nadi and three bronze by Kamal Abdul Majid, Khalidoun Abdul Hameed and Basel Hindawi. In athletics, Nada Kassar won a gold by in the discus and a silver medal in the shot put; Fakhreddin Fuad added another gold in the high jump; Ala' Abdul Hadi won a bronze in the triple jump and Amal Matar took another bronze in the women's marathon.

Ayed Khawaldeh became the first Jordanian to win three bronze weightlifting medals; Amer Nattour took silver and bronze medals in fencing and Mousa Khalaf took a silver for Jordan in judo.

Abdul Hakim Abu Sneh took the silver medal in the 69-kilogramme Graeco-Roman wrestling while in table tennis Iyad Maknay and Abdul Aziz Rida took the bronze in doubles and added another bronze in the team event.

In women's basketball, Jordan finished fourth after losing to Lebanon while the men also lost to Syria and were to play Kuwait for 5th and 6th places.

In shooting, Khaled Naghaway was eliminated from the top six qualifying positions so were the rest of the Kingdom's swimmers whose results were far from Arab records although some

of them bettered their individual bests. In the men's 100-metres butterfly, Andre Khouri finished with a time of 1:06.89 seconds and was eliminated in the first round.

Rania Ghosbeh finished fifth in the 200 metre-freestyle with a time of 2:24 seconds, while Yazan Khouri finished 11th among 16 swimmers in the 800 metres freestyle with a time of 9:54.48 seconds.

Over 3,000 athletes are in Beirut for the largest gathering of Arab youth since the event was last held in Syria in 1992.

With Iraqi athletes barred from competition because of a boycott threat by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, 19 countries are taking part in the Beirut Games with only Somalia and the Comoros missing the event.

Twenty events are being contested at the Games excluding kick-boxing, bandball, gymnastics, body-building, bockey, diving and water polo for technical and financial reasons.

The Kingdom's 187-strong delegation which includes 94 men and 33 women athletes are competing in 14 of the 20 events. The delegation also includes 27 officials, 20 coaches and 13 referees.

Jordan dropped participation in cycling, tennis and volleyball, and will be competing in athletics, basketball, karate, swimming, taekwondo, table tennis, boxing, equestrian, fencing, soccer, weightlifting,

Schedule of events of Jordanian competitors at the 8th Pan-Arab Games for Thursday, July 24, 1997

- Freestyle wrestling
- Taekwondo
- Swimming
- Equestrian

Medals table (excluding Wednesday's results)

Nation	G	S	B	Total
Egypt	66	30	21	117
Algeria	27	31	36	94
Morocco	12	12	7	31
Qatar	8	6	12	26
Tunisia	7	6	13	27
Syria	5	22	26	53
Saudi Arabia	5	6	17	28
Jordan	4	4	18	26
Lebanon	2	13	30	45
Kuwait	1	7	11	19
Oman	1	1	1	3
Sudan	0	1	2	3
Palestine	0	0	1	1
Bahrain	0	0	1	1

judo, freestyle and Graeco-Roman wrestling and shooting. Other events at the Games include golf and yachting.

In line with international rules, drug testing was introduced for the first time since the Arab Games were launched in 1953. All gold medalists are being tested for performance-enhancing drugs, in addition to one other competitor selected in a draw in each event.

Jordan has received approval to host the 9th Pan-Arab Games in 2001. Kuwait was chosen as a substitute in case Jordan withdrew their bid.

Jordanian sports officials have underlined their support for organising and taking part in the Pan-Arab Games which have only

been held seven times since 1953.

But the Games were clouded by Lebanon's refusal to grant the Iraqi team entry visas for fear of angering Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Jordan has taken part in all past seven Pan-Arab Games gaining a total of 49 medals (7 gold, 16 silver, 26 bronze).

Jordan finished 9th overall in the last Pan-Arab Games in 1992 with 1 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals.

The Pan-Arab Games were held in Alexandria 1953, Beirut 1957, Casablanca 1961, Cairo 1965, Damascus 1976, Rabat 1985 and Damascus 1992.

## 2 women athletes fail drug tests at Arab Games

BEIRUT (AFP) — Two female athletes competing in the Arab Games have failed drug tests in the latest doping scandal to rock the event, officials said on Wednesday.

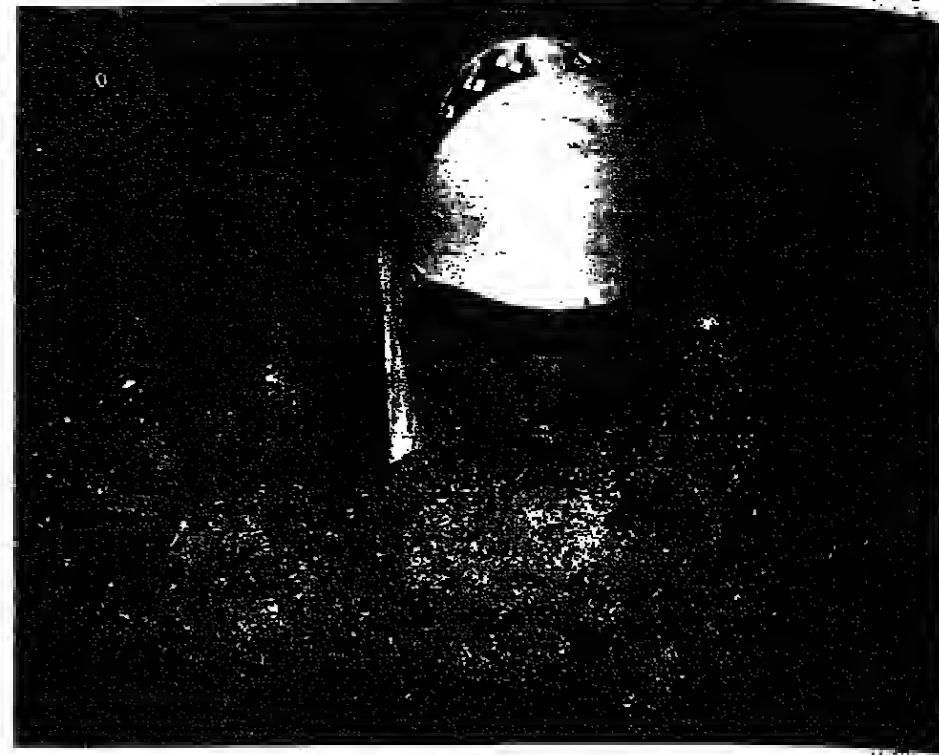
Syrian triple jumper Maha Mohammed Al Hassan tested positive for a banned stimulant, according to Dr. Ridah Kazem, the head of the games' doping committee. The athlete did not win a medal, however, and Kazem did not specify what penalties she would incur.

Basketball player Karima Shaniur of Tunisia tested positive for a drug to combat low blood-pressure and has been kicked out of the tournament, Kazem added.

Tunisia, which beat Lebanon 55-52 on Monday in the latest round robin stage, also risks being disqualified from the basketball event.

Tunisia is currently ranked fifth in the medals table at the 8th Pan-Arab Games with seven golds, while Syria has five.

On Sunday Kazem revealed that Saudi Arabia's Khaled Al Khalidi, winner of the gold medal in the discus and silver medal in the shot, had also failed a drug test.



Mihdiyeh Billah of Algeria competes in the women's 100m breaststroke at the Pan Arab Games in the Bekaa Valley of Zahle. Billah won the gold medal in a time of 1:17.21 seconds (Reuters photo)



Mohammad Jaber Karam (L), Ayman Husni (2nd), Mohammad Ghawi (3rd) and Mohamed Khalil (R) show their gold medals after winning the final of the Graeco-Roman Wrestling of the Pan-Arab Games in Beirut (Reuters photo)

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Stuttgart qualify for German League Cup final

BONN (R) — Stuttgart qualified for the final of the German League Cup with an impressive 3-0 victory over Karlsruhe in Osnabrueck on Tuesday. They will meet either Bayern Munich or European Cup winners Borussia Dortmund in the final in Leverkusen on Saturday. Stuttgart went in front with a goal by Matthias Hagner in the 11th minute. Playmaker Krassimir Balakov made it 2-0 from a free kick in the 28th minute and Zvonimir Soldo put the issue beyond doubt with a header after 63 minutes. The League Cup tournament, involving the top six teams of last season, replaces the traditional Supercup between the league champions and the Cup Winners as the curtainraiser to the Bundesliga season which starts on August 2. Bayern and Dortmund play their semifinal in Augsburg on Wednesday.

### Newcastle sign Pistone from Internazionale

MILAN (R) — Italian defender Alessandro Pistone has joined English Premier League Newcastle from Internazionale for 13 billion lire (\$7.6 million), the Milan club said on Tuesday. Newcastle signed Pistone on a four-year contract worth \$1 million a year with a clause which stipulates that if he returns to Italy he must play for Inter. "The offer from Newcastle was sizeable, Pistone will be earning more than double what he's making here," Inter President Massimo Moratti said. "His choice was inevitable and he'll pick up experience in England but I hope to see him in the blue and black shirt of Inter in the future." Pistone, who turns 22 on Sunday, joined Inter in November 1995 after three seasons playing in the lower reaches of the Italian League.

### Davis Cup final would be in San Diego

WHITE PLAINS (R) — If the U.S. Davis Cup team beats Australia in their World Group semifinal and Italy beats Sweden in the other semi, the U.S.-Italy final would be in San Diego, California, November 28-30, the United States Tennis Association announced Tuesday. Sweden would have choice of venue for the final if it beats Italy.

### Coach Ricardo to leave PSG

PARIS (R) — Paris St Germain Manager Ricardo is to leave France at the end of the coming season to return to Brazil, the French sports daily L'Equipe said on Wednesday. Ricardo, who joined PSG last season as a coach after ending his playing career with Benfica, told club officials he did not want to renew his contract when it expired in June 1998. The former Brazilian international defender may go to Fluminense, who approached him during last month's Tournoi de France, L'Equipe added.

### Bogdanovic joins Atletico

MADRID (R) — Yugoslav international striker Rade Bogdanovic has joined Spain's Atletico Madrid for 150 million pesetas (\$1 million) from Japanese club JEF United. Spanish newspapers reported on Wednesday.

### Perec will run in World Championships

PARIS (R) — Double Olympic champion Marie-Jose Perec has changed her mind about shunning next month's Athletics World Championships in Athens and will compete in the 200 metres. French Federation sources said. Perec, who won the 200 and 400 metres titles at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, called federation President Philippe Lamblin from her home in Los Angeles on Tuesday to ask him to add her to the French entry list. The entry deadline is Wednesday (today). Perec said after a meeting in Lausanne on July 2 that she would miss the World Championships following a disastrous start to the season in which she has lost all three 200 metres she has run.

## Jordanian officials elected to top posts in Arab federations

### Women's basketball team returns; standing may be altered

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

AS MOST events at the Pan-Arab Games have either been completed or are in their final stages with five days remaining in the competition, Jordan women's basketball team returned to Amman Wednesday after finishing fourth following their 60-51 defeat to Lebanon.

However, there was speculation as to the final standing of the team as it was announced that one of the players on the Tunisian team had tested positive for drugs and the result of her team might be scrapped from the five-team event (see separate story).

Tunisia had beat Jordan and Lebanon and had a match against Syria and were vying for top place against Egypt. However, if they are disqualified Lebanon and Egypt will

play for the gold medal and Jordan who beat Syria 56-53 might get the bronze.

Meanwhile, the equestrian event gets underway Thursday with teams from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt taking part.

The taekwondo, and freestyle wrestling events also get underway today.

On the sidelines of the competition, Major-General Salmaan Ma'ayah the president of the Jordan Karate Federation was elected to the post of president of the Arab Karate Federation.

The Arab Taekwondo Federation, also elected Jordan Taekwondo Federation President General Kamal Shabsogh to the post of third deputy vice-chairman, and Samer Kamal was elected to the post of head of the referees committee.

## Agassi's path gets steeper with each defeat

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Andre Agassi made another ignominious ATP Tour exit here Tuesday, falling in straight sets to 103rd-ranked Justin Gimelstob in the first round of the \$303,000 tournament here.

Agassi, the former world number one beat Gimelstob, who claimed a big scalp at Wimbledon when he upset French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten in the first round, won the match 7-5, 6-2 in an hour and 26 minutes.

"I still feel like I'm getting a lead there and not remembering how to win," said Agassi, clearly disappointed but trying hard not to be discouraged. Agassi's defeat overshadowed top seed Goran Ivanisevic's 7-6 (7/4), 6-3

first-round victory over South African Neville Godwin.

The Croatian, battling a stomach ailment that forced him to withdraw from doubles on Monday, said he was satisfied with his performance, given that he still had a slight fever and hadn't played a match in three weeks.

"I played OK," he said. "There's a lot to work on. I played a good tiebreaker ... when I needed to I came up with some good serves and some good returns."

Agassi, the 27-year-old former Wimbledon, U.S. Open and Australian Open champion has now lost eight of his last nine ATP Tour matches.

Until Washington last week, he hadn't played

since a May 1 defeat by Sweden's Magnus Norman because of a right wrist injury.

Agassi said his conditioning had improved since last week, but he still didn't feel he was match fit.

"I still need to react to the ball a little quicker, need to feel a little more snap in my legs," he said.

Agassi's No. 32 world ranking was good enough to make him the seventh seed, but he struggled on his serve, and with the groundstrokes that have always been the cornerstone of his game.

Agassi said the days when his reputation gave him an automatic edge over less experienced players were long gone.

"That's lost," he said.

"It'll take something to prove — even to myself — that I can beat these guys day in day out."

Gimelstob earned a second-round match against Zimbabwe's Byron Black. Black beat Doug Flach — who defeated Agassi in Washington — 6-2, 6-0.

Third-seeded Australian Mark Philippoussis survived a first-set scare to beat Brazilian Roberto Jabali 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/0).

Fourth-seeded Richard Krajicek and sixth-seeded Jim Courier both advanced at the expense of South Africans.

Krajicek, of the Netherlands, defeated Marcos Ondruska 6-4, 6-4, while Courier beat Grant Stafford 7-5, 7-5.

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## Ronaldo to be Inter's No. 10

MILAN (AFP) — Manchester United will have to watch out for Inter Milan's No. 10 here on Sunday, as the Italian club prepare to unleash Ronaldo on the English champions.

Ronaldo is now destined for San Siro after FIFA brokered a compromise deal on Tuesday between Inter and Barcelona.

Football's ruling body approved the transfer, despite Barcelona's initial claim that Ronaldo's get-out clause was only valid in Spain. However, FIFA accepted the Spaniards' demands for more money.

Inter President Massimo Moratti is looking forward to fielding the 20-year-old striker, who is expected here on Friday, and has already got his shirt ready.

"I understand that Ivan Zamorano is very attached to his number nine shirt, and deep down that's something that makes me feel very proud," Moratti said.

"We're putting our faith in Ronaldo's good sense and I think he'll have the No. 10. Still, that's also a great number isn't it?"

Speaking from Brazil, Ronaldo said: "The president has made the right decision. The number 10 shirt was once Zico's and Pele's — how could I not be proud of wearing that?"

He went on: "Now I know for certain that, all talking aside, I'm going to play for Inter. I knew that FIFA would respect my wishes," he told the Gazzetta Dello Sport.

"One thing I want to say though is this — how can Barcelona justify asking for more money? When I signed my contract with Barcelona last year, it was because I knew that for four billion pesetas (\$27.6 million), I could leave.

"Now I want to know why that doesn't apply any more."

The two clubs have a week to reach an agreement on how much on top Inter will have to find. Barcelona are believed to be seeking a large sum in cash (reportedly \$17 million to \$23 million), while Inter are more interested in arranging lucrative friendships.

"Every extra lira that I would have to spend would be a great injustice. We've fought for a principle and we want to continue to do so," said Moratti, who nevertheless did not rule out a player swap.

"I am very attached to my players..." said the oil magnate.

"But having said that, and adding that I would like to know more about what FIFA and Barcelona are asking from for us, it's nonetheless true that I cannot remain indifferent to an 'invitation' from FIFA."

If no agreement is found between Inter and Barcelona by July 31, FIFA have said they will impose the extra fee.

The sub-plot to Barcelona's hard bargaining is that club president Josep Nunez is up for reelection on Sunday. His future will probably be decided by his handling of the Ronaldo affair.

Inter's match against Manchester United on Sunday in the first leg of the Pirelli Cup, a friendly tournament arranged as part of Paul Ince's 1995 transfer from the English champions — the solution Inter now want to use for Ronaldo.

The second leg will be on July 30 at Old Trafford, although Ince has just signed for Liverpool.



Neil Stephens of Australia holds up his arms as he wins the 218.5km 17th stage of the Tour de France cycling race between Frihourg (Switzerland) and Colmar. Germany's Jan Ullrich retains his yellow jersey (Reuters photo)

## Aussie wins in Tour de France

COLMAR, France (AFP) — Neil Stephens of Australia — known as Mr 100 per cent — achieved the biggest win of his career when he won the 17th stage of the Tour de France on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old — who earned his nickname because he is considered a model professional — surged clear from a breakaway group of 13 km from the finish and was never caught.

"I've been chasing a win all year and I've finally got one in the biggest race in the world," he said.

He swung his arms as if he was rocking a baby as he crossed the finish line and afterwards dedicated his win to his daughter.

He was the first Australian to triumph in the Tour since Phil Anderson, who wore the yellow jersey, 12 years ago.

Stephens, who rode for once for the last five years, is riding in his sixth tour and can usually be seen at the front of the peloton setting the pace for his Festina teammates Richard Virenque, the king of the mountains, and Laurent Brochard who had claimed earlier wins for Festina.

German Jan Ullrich, tucked into the peloton as a shower of memories of his fall in the mid libre last year, kept the leader's yellow jersey.

The pack finished four minutes behind the lead group who had broken away after 68km of the 218km stage.

Thursday's 175km 18th stage is from Colmar to Montbéliard.

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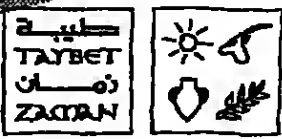
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## FIA rules out Portuguese Formula 1 Grand Prix

LISBON (R) — The Portuguese Formula One Grand Prix, scheduled for November 9, has been cancelled.

"Following consultation with all the competing teams, it is clear there is no unanimous agreement to add an extra event to the 1997 Formula One World Championship," the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said in a statement from its headquarters in Paris on Tuesday.

"The proposed event on November 9, 1997, will therefore not take place."

The Portuguese race had originally been scheduled for October 26.

But it was replaced with the European Grand Prix at Jerez, Spain, after it appeared that required safety work

at the Estoril track would not be completed in time.

Although the Portuguese economy minister stepped in and announced that the track would be ready for a race on a new date of November 9, the FIA responded that it would go ahead only if there was unanimous approval among the F1 teams.

The majority were in favour of the added event but it is believed McLaren, Ferrari and Sauber were against the idea.

FIA said it hoped the Portuguese event would be back on the calendar next year.

Portugal pledged to press ahead with work to modernise the twisting Estoril

circuit, saying it was confident the race would return in 1998 and remain a fixture in the years ahead.

"The economy ministry recognises the efforts made by FIA to hold the Portuguese Grand Prix, and is certain that as a result of the necessary changes being made, a medium term contract to stage the race will be signed," it said in a statement.

The government recently took a controlling interest in the Estoril track as part of a deal to resolve a series of long-standing disputes with former owners Grupo Para.

It has made one billion escudos (\$5.5 million) available for the modifications demanded by FIA.

## Maleeva, Martinez advance in California

PALO ALTO, California (R) — Once a highly touted babe in the tennis woods herself, 22-year-old Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria is worried for 16-year-old Martina Hingis.

Magdalena, who turned pro at the tender age of 14 and quickly rose up the ranking charts to end 1995 ranked sixth, prepared for a second-round bout with Hingis by trouncing Jana Nedeljkovic of Canada 6-0 6-3 Tuesday in the first round of the \$450,000 Bank of the West Classic.

Maleeva, the youngest sister of a tennis-playing family that includes now retired siblings Manuela and Katerina, said that Hingis's meteoric rise to the top of the world may be hazardous to her emotional health.

"It's too much at age 16 for Martina to face everything she has to face," Maleeva said. "I'm very happy for her and she's obviously very talented, but to be 16 and No. 1 with so many obligations is too much for her head."

"Right now, it might seem OK, but in the future, things could get very bad for her. It's very hard to handle all that attention at such an early age. It's just not normal."

Touted as the best player in her family, Maleeva has actually seen a decline in her play since her sisters retired. She has spent the last year "doing normal things" such as hitchhiking with friends around Bulgaria.

While she says her desire is still there, Maleeva, who owns six career titles

including the 1995 bank of the west title, has fallen to 49th in the rankings and has not reached a semifinal this year.

"I'm working hard to get my confidence back but it's not easy," Maleeva said.

Maleeva and Hingis will play Wednesday evening. Other high seeds in action Wednesday will be third seed Amanda Coetzer, fourth seed Lindsay Davenport and fifth seed Mary Pierce.

Sixth seed Conchita Martinez of Spain also was in action on Tuesday, sporting a new coach and more aggressive forehand in her 6-3 6-2 victory over Stobhan Drake Broekman of Australia.

Before arriving in Palo Alto, the former Wimbledon champ fired coach Joe Brandi, who had been

coaching her since the beginning of the year. Martinez replaced him with veteran coach Gabriel Urpi, the former coach of Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Albert Costa.

"We just didn't connect," Martinez said of Brandi. "He's a great person and coach, but when things aren't working for you, sometimes you need a change."

Martinez is currently ranked 11th, her lowest since 1990. The owner of 28 career titles, the 25-year-old has not won a tournament this year.

Other first-round winners on Tuesday were seventh seed Kimberly Po, Rita Grande of Italy and three Americans — Sandra Cucie, Meilen Tu and Amy Frazier.

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## Sunni Muslim chief reaffirms opposition to female excision

CAIRO (AFP) — The Sheikh of Al Azhar said he supports the Egyptian health ministry's ban on female circumcision despite a court decision to allow the practice.

"I support the health ministry's decision to ban excision because it is a medical and not a religious matter," Sheikh Mohammad Sayyid Tantawi said in an interview published Wednesday in the weekly Al-Mussawwar.

"I still believe that concerning excision, there are specialised doctors who should do the cutting. If they say excision is unnecessary, we should listen to them," he added.

In June, a Cairo court struck down a ban on circumcision announced by

Health Minister Ismail Sallam, said the clitoris and sometimes the labia are usually removed and carried out on girls of about 10.

Female excision continues to be widespread in Egypt, where 97 per cent of Muslim and Christian women are circumcised, according to a study released in February.

Some doctors say circumcision is Islamic and important to quell sexual desire before marriage, but it has claimed the lives of several young girls who bled to death at the hands of amateur "surgeons," often barbers.

But the Sheikh said, "all the Hadith on excision are weak." The Hadith are sayings of the Prophet

Mohammad, one of the foundations of Islamic legislation.

However, he criticised U.S. State Department comments that it was disappointed by the court ruling. "Neither America, nor Europe, nor any country has the right to interfere in the affairs of another country. If it offers suggestions, we welcome them, but if it gives orders, we reject them," Sheikh Tantawi said.

A health ministry spokesman said last week that Mr. Sallam "is 100 per cent convinced of the necessity of ending this unhealthy custom and that the law gives him the right not to implement the administration court decision until the appeal has been heard."

## Israeli army budget slashed amidst high Mideast tension

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army, which has called for greater spending to prepare for a possible Mideast war, instead finds itself having to tighten its belt after a swinging budget cut imposed Wednesday.

The government voted to slash \$57 million from defence spending as part of an overall \$230-million budget cut for 1997 which will also hit education and health.

Twelve ministers voted in favour of the austerity measures and four against in an overnight cabinet session boycotted by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to show his disgust at the cuts.

According to military radio, Mr. Mordechai was especially furious because he said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised he would boost army spending at a time of increased Israeli-Arab tension due to the four-month deadline in the peace process.

Mr. Mordechai said the army needed \$600 million in extra funding. Army chief of Staff General Amnon Shahak has said the army does not have the necessary means to wage war at the moment, especially against neighbouring Syria.

The military commentator for the daily Yediot Aharonot, Ron Ben Ishai, said: "There is a shortage in weapons and ammunition supplies" and the army may not have enough money to send some units on training exercises.

Defence spending, which takes up 12.2 per cent of the total budget, was forecast at \$7.2 billion for this year, a figure which includes \$1.8 billion in annual U.S. military aid.

The newly-appointed finance minister, Yaakov Neeman, sought to play down the row, saying it was possible to "make savings in the defence budget without undermining the country's security."

Mr. Neeman told Israel radio he was not aware of any promise to boost defence spending from Mr. Netanyahu.

"We must introduce cuts because it's the only way to boost growth and create jobs," he said.

Treasury officials have repeatedly attacked soldiers' "privileges," pointing out that nearly half the defence budget goes on operational costs, salaries, pension payments, training

schemes and cars for officers.

Some career soldiers can retire on a full pension at the age of 42.

The left-wing opposition to Mr. Netanyahu's government criticised his priorities when it came to spending public money.

"At a time when the government is attacking the country's security, it is preparing to ask for an extra \$26 million from the parliament's finance committee to build new homes in West Bank settlements," said former Labour Finance Minister Avraham Shohat.

Israel's peace talks with the Palestinians have been stalled since mid-March when Mr. Netanyahu ordered work to start on a new Jewish settlement on the edge of occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

The Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process has been in deep freeze since February 1996, with the Syrians insisting Israel pledge to withdraw from the occupied Golan Heights before negotiations can resume.

Gen. Shahak reportedly said last month that Syria was preparing for a possible surprise attack on Israel.

which Ms. Chazan said is expected to be passed easily into law.

Few studies have been done on sexual harassment in Israel although a recent survey of women university students found that almost 50 per cent had been victims of sexual harassment at some point in their lives.

Sexual harassment is more prevalent in Israel than in European countries because of the "macho culture" formed around the army, the country's largest employer, said Carmel Eitan, spokeswoman for the Naaman Women's Rights Organisation.

"Here we are living in a Middle Eastern culture which is more chauvinistic," Ms. Eitan told AFP. "And the army culture also adds a lot. Boys grow up learning that they are allowed to do anything. Men serve three years in the military plus one month of reserve duty each year and women, who serve for two years, are often harassed by male superiors."

To add to the already tough situation, Judaism "does not exactly take the most advanced position for women," Ms. Eitan added. Ms. Eitan cited a recent ruling by Chief Sephardic Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in which he likened women to donkeys.

"He who walks between two camels or two donkeys runs the risk of being transformed into a donkey or a camel. In the same way, a man should not walk between two women," Rabbi Yosef said, warning men to keep their minds on religious study.

## Israeli court makes landmark ruling against workplace sexual harassment

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli court has created a legal fist by jailing a middle-aged factory manager who used his position of power in the workplace to force a female subordinate to have sex.

Lauded by feminists and legal commentators as a landmark decision, the ruling by a Tel Aviv district court against a cookie factory boss is expected to encourage sexually harassed women to take their complaints to court.

"This is a very important decision, a legal precedent," Israeli Parliamentarian Naon Chazan of the left-wing Meretz Party told Agence France Presse (AFP). "The problem up until now was that women did not want to complain."

Even if Israeli women victims get up enough courage to tackle the court system, they often have to face sceptical police and usually take the cases to civil court as no sexual harassment law exists in Israel.

Courts have at most awarded victims \$1,400 and punished the offender with a few months of community service.

In last week's precedent-setting case, Rafael Arbib was jailed for nine months under a law preventing the abuse of power in the workplace that was for the first time used for a sexual offence.

According to the court affidavit, Arbib, 54, used his position as manager at the cookie factory south of Tel Aviv to persuade the unnamed victim to have sex with him, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

When she did not respond

to his desires, he transferred her to a more difficult position until she complied and was returned to her original job.

The married mother-of-two, a recent immigrant from the former Soviet Union, consented to have intercourse with Arbib sometimes several times a day for fear of losing her job.

Even though she agreed to the sexual relations, Judge Amir Benyamini ruled that Arbib used his power in the unequal relationship to take advantage of her.

In addition to the jail term, Arbib was given a one-year suspended sentence, fined \$450 and ordered to pay the victim \$3,000 compensation.

"Although legally the accused did not rape the plaintiff, he raped her spirit," Judge Benyamini wrote. In an editorial, the newspaper hailed the judge's sensitivity.

"Too many complaints lodged by women and children, who were raped degraded and turned into a vehicle for satisfying the desires of violent pervers, have concluded in Israeli courts in the form of a plea bargain or an absurd verdict," it wrote.

The courts make such decisions "on the grounds the defendant had no criminal record and that he was an exemplary family man or a leading citizen in his community," the paper added.

Ms. Chazan and six other deputies in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, are due to present a bill this year specifically dealing with sexual harassment.

which Ms. Chazan said is expected to be passed easily into law.

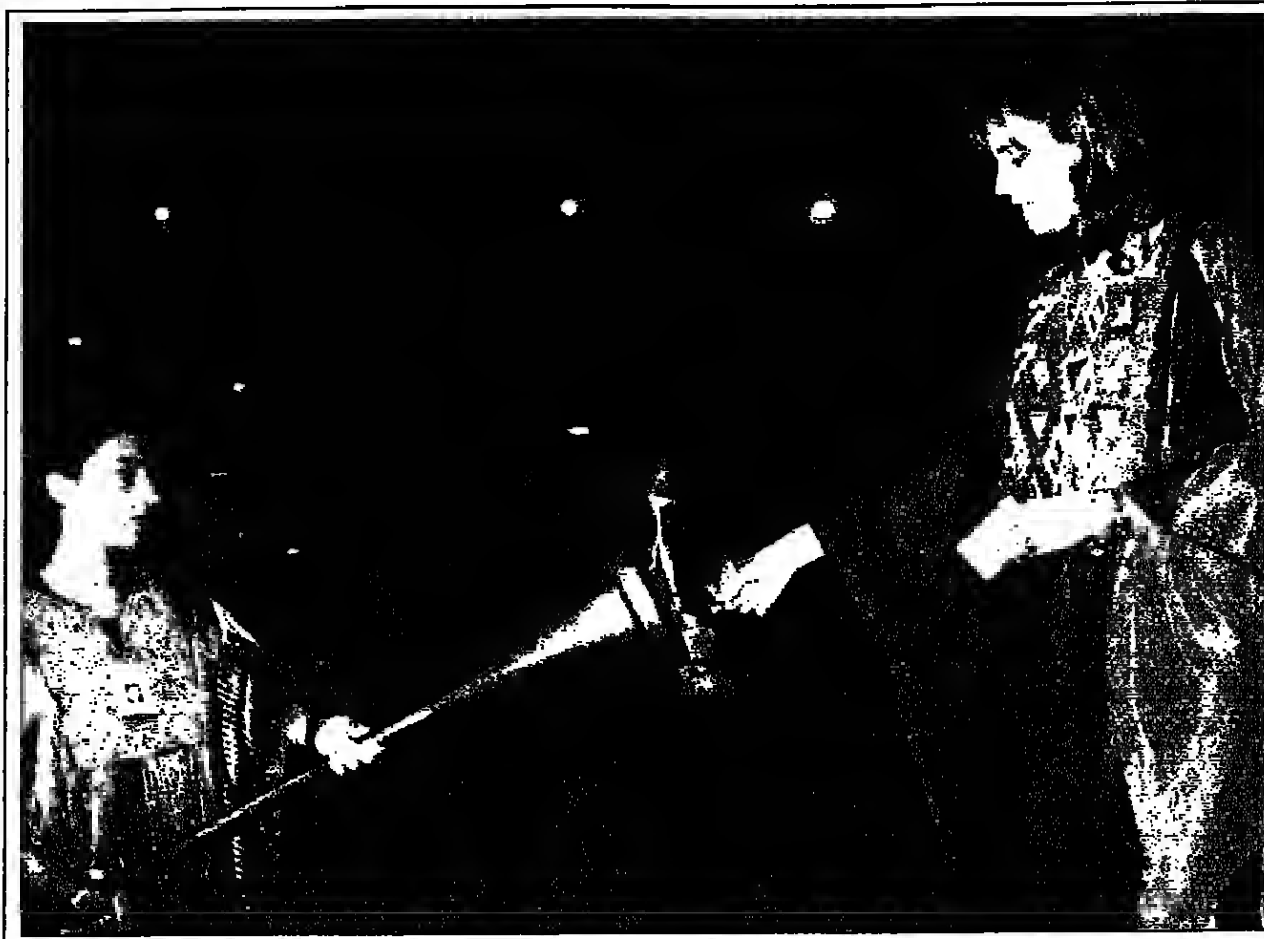
Few studies have been done on sexual harassment in Israel although a recent survey of women university students found that almost 50 per cent had been victims of sexual harassment at some point in their lives.

Sexual harassment is more prevalent in Israel than in European countries because of the "macho culture" formed around the army, the country's largest employer, said Carmel Eitan, spokeswoman for the Naaman Women's Rights Organisation.

"Here we are living in a Middle Eastern culture which is more chauvinistic," Ms. Eitan told AFP. "And the army culture also adds a lot. Boys grow up learning that they are allowed to do anything. Men serve three years in the military plus one month of reserve duty each year and women, who serve for two years, are often harassed by male superiors."

To add to the already tough situation, Judaism "does not exactly take the most advanced position for women," Ms. Eitan added. Ms. Eitan cited a recent ruling by Chief Sephardic Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in which he likened women to donkeys.

"He who walks between two camels or two donkeys runs the risk of being transformed into a donkey or a camel. In the same way, a man should not walk between two women," Rabbi Yosef said, warning men to keep their minds on religious study.



JERASH GLAMOUROUS ONCE AGAIN: Her Majesty Queen Noor lights the Torch of Jerash, Wednesday, launching the ancient city's 16th annual festival of culture and arts (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

## Mubarak calls on Arabs to launch an economic market

CAIRO (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak urged Arab governments Wednesday to speed up efforts to set up an Arab economic market, which he said was needed to compete with major world economic blocs.

But in a remark seemed designed to mollify Israel's concerns that such a move will exclude the Jewish State, Mr. Mubarak said the Arab common market should only be a start for wider regional cooperation.

"We want an Arab economic entity that preserves the Arab interests in this era of large international blocs," he said in a speech marking

the 45th anniversary of the army coup which toppled the monarchy in Egypt.

Egypt recently has pushed for reactivation of decades-old agreements by the 22-member Arab League on promoting inter-Arab trade. It has signed accords with several Arab countries to set up duty-free zones and plans to negotiate more.

Mr. Mubarak said trade among Arab countries remains "scant and weak." It is just 8 per cent of the Arab countries' world trade.

While Mr. Mubarak said the Arabs did not want a confrontation with other economic blocs, Syria has

been pushing for an Arab economic market specifically to halt Israel's expanding trade with the Arab World.

In the 30-minute speech broadcast on state television, Mr. Mubarak also promised to speed up the economic reform programme that he launched in 1991.

He said his government plans to find jobs for some 500,000 Egyptians annually and to triple its rate of economic growth to meet the increase in Egypt's population. Egypt's annual growth is believed to be around 5 per cent.

Meanwhile, the government daily Al-Ahram

Wednesday quoted Mr. Mubarak as saying that Iran has offered military cooperation with Egypt in an attempt to counter Israeli-Turkish military cooperation.

Iran has been trying to improve its relations with Egypt, which have been tense since the 1979 Islamist revolution and grew worse over accusations that Tehran was helping Islamist radicals fighting Mr. Mubarak's government.

"Iran approached us in the military field, but in these issues we cannot make an instant decision," Mr. Mubarak was quoted as saying.

## Qatar sticks to its guns on MENA summit

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar said Wednesday it is determined to go it alone and host the Middle East economic summit with Israel at the conference table, sticking to an independent line from its Gulf Arab neighbours.

Le Matin said 38 died in one attack and nine in another overnight Sunday-Monday.

Another newspaper, Al Watan also reported two massacres in the same area in which it said 26 people had died. It said the attacks took place overnight Monday-Tuesday.

It was not clear from the details given whether the attacks reported by the two papers, in a country where verifying details of killings is difficult, were the same incidents or different.

As usual, there was no official report or comment.

The death toll reported by Le Matin was one of the highest this year from attacks on isolated communities. In April, 93 people were slaughtered in one attack, and 51 died earlier this month in one night of

## Muslim rebels kill 47 in Algerian villages — paper

PARIS (R) — Muslim rebels killed 47 people, mostly by cutting their throats, in two attacks south of the capital Algiers, an Algerian newspaper said Wednesday.

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The death toll reported by Le Matin was one of the highest this year from attacks on isolated communities. In April, 93 people were slaughtered in one attack, and 51 died earlier this month in one night of

attacks in Algiers and the neighbouring province of Medea.

This week's attacks in Blida province coincided with reports that 140 members of the feared Armed Islamic Group (GIA) had been killed by troops in the same region while they were meeting to plan strategy in their attempts to overthrow the authorities.

Le Matin said the massacres took place on the outskirts of Blida, both a garrison town and known fundamentalist stronghold, 50 kilometres south of Algiers.

The newspaper said "the terrorists" — Algeria's official term for fundamentalists — cut the throats of nine people from two families in Benachour.

Residents gave the alert and the group went to the village of Yemma M'ghidia where they carried out the second massacre, including a whole family of 15 people.

"Several ambulances carrying the mortal remains draped in the national flag

were seen yesterday afternoon in Blida going from Frantz Fanon Hospital towards the town's martyrs' cemetery," Le Matin said.

Al Watan said 20 "terrorists" killed 26 people in two attacks in Blida overnight Monday-Tuesday.

Eight, including four women and a three-year-old child, came from one family. Their throats were cut. Two young girls were also taken away by the attackers. Like Le Matin, the newspaper said that attack took place in Benachour.

Witnesses told Al Watan that security forces intervened and prevented further carnage and that in a gun battle the attackers reportedly suffered casualties. They took their dead and wounded away with them as they fled.

Al Watan said that another group attacked a village on the road to Chrea and killed 18 people from two families "among them, 11 women and seven men, all with their throats cut."

## Smuggling of Iraqi diesel widespread in Arab Gulf

DUBAI (R) — Illicit smuggling of Iraqi diesel oil has become widespread in the Gulf with a market created by local and international shipping firms eager to buy cheap fuel to power their vessels.

Gulf shipping sources said Wednesday.

As Iraqi and U.N. officials continue to discuss the next stage of an oil-for-food deal, Iraqi middlemen, foreign traders and shippers are doing a brisk and lucrative business that runs into hundreds of millions of dollars.

Although this trade has been rumbling on since U.N. sanctions were slapped on Iraq after its

1990 invasion of Kuwait, shippers said that activity had stepped up since the end of last year because of high diesel prices in the international market.

"The price of Iraqi diesel is \$30 to \$50 a tonne below the international market price and when you want 4,000 tonnes or 5,000 tonnes for your ships it is very attractive," said one Gulf-based shipping executive who admitted to regularly buying Iraqi diesel and wanted to remain anonymous.

Though authorities across the Gulf have caught and impounded vessels involved in the smuggling,

shippers said the number of arrests accounted for only a small part of the trade which is carried out on a cash and also barter basis.

Loaded at Iraq's southern ports with false or no paperwork, embargoed diesel is shipped to customers in barges and small vessels which cling to the shallow coastal waters of the Gulf to avoid capture by a U.S.-led multinational naval interdiction force mandated to implement sanctions against Iraq.

The diesel is then transferred out at sea to the paying ship owner with rare interference from authorities, shippers said.



Model Elle MacPherson denies having 'boy toy'

LOS ANGELES (R) — Model Elle MacPherson spoke out for the first time about two men accused of blackmailing her and threatening to put stolen nude photographs of her on the Internet. She denied she had a "boy toy" relationship with one of them. In her first comments on the case, MacPherson told reporters that she wanted to "clear the record." She said that there was a burglary at her LA home in which \$100,000 worth of jewellery, cash, and some nude photos of her were stolen. She said the burglar later contacted her and threatened to release the nude pictures onto the Internet if she did not pay \$60,000. She notified the police and the two men were arrested when they picked up the money at a Beverly Hills shopping mall. Both men have pleaded innocent on 20 counts of burglary and extortion.

## Helicopter granny two-thirds around world

TORRANCE (R) — Braving an Arabian sandstorm, a Bangladeshi cyclone and Russian bureaucracy, a British grandmother landed Tuesday on her way to becoming the first woman to fly round the world in a helicopter. "We're here on time and on schedule," a beaming Jennifer Murray said after stepping from her fire-engine-red chopper at the Torrance airport in suburban Los Angeles. "But we still have another three-and-a-half weeks to go to get back to London," said the whirlwind granny. Murray, 56, is a mother of three, with two grandchildren, has lived for 30 years in Hong Kong. She left England on May 10 with co-pilot Quentin Smith in an attempt to become the first woman to fly a helicopter around the world.

## Overseas trip costs Hindu priest his job

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A Hindu priest has lost his job in a southern Indian temple after he refused to undergo a penance for going overseas — a grave sin according to ancient Hindu tradition, news reports said Wednesday.

Vishnu Narayan Nambodiri, a Brahmin priest from the southern coastal state of Kerala, was debarred from the Sri Vallabha Temple following his refusal to chant a "cleansing" prayer 1,008 times, the United Nations of India said. Ancient Hinduism forbids travel across the "seven seas" — a "sin" which leads to ex-communication — unless it is atoned for by performing rituals. The number 1,008 is regarded as a holy figure.

Nambodiri, who returned to India this month after attending a seminar in Britain, said his sacking was unfair.

## 12-year-old girl attacked by bear at Ukrainian zoo

MOSCOW (AFP) — A 12-year-old girl lost her arm when she was attacked by a bear Tuesday at a zoo in the southeastern Ukrainian town of Dnepropetrovsk, ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The girl was attacked after she and a friend convinced an animal keeper to allow them to approach the bear's cage to pet it and feed it sweets. Several other adults tried to chase the child away, but before they could do so, the bear grabbed hold of the girl's arm. With some difficulty, zoo employees managed to free the girl and she was taken to a local hospital where her arm was amputated just below the shoulder. Zoo officials said that as a result of the attack, the bear would be destroyed.

## Israeli premiers go to change election

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Two former Israeli premiers went to the polls on Thursday to call for the law which brought Benjamin Netanyahu to power to be repealed.

Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Likud Party leader Yitzhak Mordechai went to the polls to call for the repeal of the law which brought Netanyahu to power.

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